



DIVE II - SEA DECOMPRESSION


THE SOUNDS OF UNDERWATER SCORING

Film composers have employed a number of devices in composing their scores for films with an underwater-related plot motif, seeking to complement or enhance the visual images and/or audio (spoken dialogue) elements in a film's "hydropheric" (underwater-related) elements. While not an exhaustive list, composers have used at least eight **Scoring Devices** as follows: principal instrument; leitmotif; sense of depth or pressure; horizontal movement; vertical movement; orchestration; sound effects (natural or electronic-synthesized); and single voice or chorus.

Drawing on the score analyses presented in previous chapters (**DIVES**), this chapter brings together into one location examples illustrative of the various **Scoring Devices** that composers have drawn upon in scoring films in various **Sea Genres** (though this writer leaves it other analysts to identify examples of composers applying these eight devices in scoring the films surveyed in the Sea Docs chapter.) Note that this survey does not provide examples from each and every film surveyed in the prior chapters, in part, because this writer's research did not turn up score reviews for many of the films or TV programs surveyed. Yet, for some films, multiple analysts have provided a plethora of reviews of the scores for some films, a prime example of this being the film **Jaws**.

While a composer might not apply all eight of these devices in a score for a given film, he or she could apply more than one device in that film's score. For example, the composer might apply one device in the music composed for one scene in a given film and a different device for another scene in the same film. Or the composer might employ two or more devices in the score for a given scene. Thus, an example presented as illustrating how a composer applied one device (e.g., Leitmotif) in scoring a scene could also be considered as illustrating another device, to the extent that the score example also draws upon one or more other devices (e.g., Vertical movement or Sound Effects). This points to the challenge a composer faces not only to come up with (i.e., "string together") an effective selection of musical notes and their sequencing to score a scene but also to decide which devices need to be drawn upon in order to score that scene effectively.

Let's now again don our diving gear and plunge into our score examples for each of the eight Scoring Devices, providing for each device examples of that device as used by a composer in scoring individual films across our ten Sea Genres. Note that original sources for quoted material are provided in the earlier chapter from which the quoted material was sourced for this chapter.



PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENT – One not infrequently hears a harp (or harps) played during an underwater scene and accompanying riffs of ascending and descending notes. Another example of principal instrument is the use of a Theremin to convey fear, eeriness, otherworldliness, or even one of the film’s protagonists.

Sea Monsters

- **Attack of the Crab Monsters** (Stein) – Stein used the harp to give a couple of underwater sequences their sonorous haze (“Martha Swims”) and create an increasingly disturbing mood, enhanced by the growing growl of brass and sustained keyboard.
- **The Phantom from 10,000 Leagues** (Stein) – The harp is frequently used to represent “the undulating undersea world, as in ‘Underwater’ where it enhances sustained woodwinds and plucks on the piano keys render a degree of apprehension.”

Sea Mutants

- **Creature from the Black Lagoon** (Stein and Others) – The cue “Salvage of the Lady Luck” accompanies a scene that takes place almost entirely underwater. The cue is particularly suited to track the underwater—and otherworldly—world of the Gill-Man because of the prominent use of Novachord (an early relative of the synthesizer) that conveyed an otherworldly tone to the film’s underwater narrative (e.g., used when the two male protagonists don their aqualungs to search for rock samples on the lagoon’s bottom). This portion of the cue is scored for muted trumpets, vibraphone, and harp.
- **Humanoids from the Deep** (Horner) – A haunting harp creates a suspenseful mood during “Night Swim” and skittering violins add to the creepy atmosphere of compositions like “Night Prowlers.”

Sea Buddies

- **The Day of the Dolphin** (Delerue) – One reviewer noted: “Delerue’s fondness for Antonio Vivaldi is . . . prominently on display, the composer using the Baroque sound of an English horn and rapidly played strings as Alpha and Beta swim in Terrell’s facility or leap above the ocean’s waves. Delerue’s music matches the animals’ joy with the same kind of natural rapture that Vivaldi gave to *The Four Seasons*. And by associating the dolphins with a classical sound, Delerue makes the animals become all that is ageless and graceful about the sea.”
- **Finding Nemo** (Newman) – Newman combined “percussion and woodwind instruments with noticeable piano cameos to give Finding Nemo a jazzy underwater rhythm. This provides the movie with a close and personal feeling that gets at the heart of any number of emotional developments.”

Sea Subs (War Subs)

- **The Hunley** (Edelman) – The score’s main theme, “[Waves of Brotherhood](#),” is “a stoically tearful song carried by a bugle solo accented with snares.”

- **Below** (Revell) – The cues for the film’s slower sections (“Searching For Answers”, “Charred Remains”, “Strange Forces”) help sustain a dark mood, particularly in “The Haunted Hull”, where Revell dials up a water-logged harp solo.

Sea Spies

- **A View to a Kill** (Barry) – When May Day pushes their Rolls-Royce into a lake (“Bond Escapes Roller”), Barry uses repeating flutes with muted brass for Bond’s survival underwater.

Sea Treasures

- **Beneath the 12-Mile Reef** (Herrmann) – To evoke the underwater world, Herrmann employed nine harps, each with its own separate part. The film is introduced by the cue “[The Sea](#)” with a “rising glissando” featuring “nine harps—each beginning on a different note,” this cue nicely defining the setting (the sea) in which the film’s narrative will develop. “The Undersea” is the first cue featuring Herrmann’s underwater music and is heard as “a narrator introduces the world beneath the ocean surface. The music strikes an exquisite balance between mystery and tranquility, with the harps sounding as gentle, steady currents obscuring light and time.” While Herrmann’s score is famous for its use of nine harps, the only time the harps are heard is during the underwater sequences.
- **CaboBlanco** (Goldsmith) – When a local fisherman dives to hunt for clams in the bay but strays too near something he should not see, Goldsmith “calls on the brass to signal the arrival of the frogmen who brutally stab the diver to death beneath the water.” This cue “initially reprises the infectious **CaboBlanco**...but...Goldsmith again provides growling brass and swirling strings for the ensuing under water struggle and his violent demise.”



LEITMOTIF – This entails using a musical theme (sequence of notes) and/or chords (combination of notes) to represent a plot motif. For underwater films, the plot motif may be the presence (actual or anticipated) of a sea creature such as the most famous two notes in film score history: “da- dum” to represent the shark in **Jaws**.

Sea Monsters

- **Gorgo** (Lavagnino) – This film’s score centers not on “the giant-monster-on-the-loose genre” but rather on two children, the 65-foot tall Gorgo, and the orphan boy Sean. The main theme, built around “a pleasant ballad...scored for accordion with a slight sea-chanty flavor to it, suggests the dedicated affection of the mother monster for the young Gorgo who is captured and taken to a London circus. The theme is later used to emphasize the boy Sean’s affection toward the lumbering, captive beast.”
- **The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms** (Buttolph) – The sea monster’s power is signaled by “a surging, four-note theme for deep, booming brass chords over wildly flurrying strings.” The four-note descending “beast” theme is introduced in the film’s “[Main Title](#)” to portend the yet-unseen monster and is heard practically every time that the dinosaur appears on screen, thus providing a bridge

between the beast's underwater origins and the havoc the monster later wreaks on Manhattan.

- **The Monster That Challenged the World** (Roemheld) – “[Main Title](#)” features “a brassy seven-note call-and-response monster theme.” Roemheld’s “ubiquitous monster theme...is...longer than many monster motifs of the era. . . . [Roemheld] often hints at the theme when peripheral clues to the mollusks’ existence surface, saving the complete theme for the film’s most monstrous moments.” “Quarantine” plays “with woodwinds creating the uneasy mood. Three notes of the monster theme augment” the image of the “No Swimming” signs at the beginning and end of this cue. “The Egg” highlights “the divers investigating the sea bottom, with the monster theme appearing and disappearing throughout the piece. Organ, strings, and woodwinds play up high...to characterize the radioactivity detected by the Geiger counter, and the entire monster theme sounds on brass...the first time we glimpse the hydraulic mollusk, looking mightily impressive in its marine hideout.”
- **Attack of the Crab Monsters** (Stein) – “Baby Crabs on the Beach” introduces “a recurring ostinato for trumpets” with each instrument not quite playing in synch with his neighbor so that this off-kilter sonority matches the ungainly movement of the colossal crustacean.
- **The Phantom from 10,000 Leagues** (Stein) – “Stein creates some cool atmospheres for the early investigation scenes, punctuated by a propulsive, insistent braying of low brass that becomes an ostinato for the undersea Monster—creating the same kind of tension when it is heard as John William’s famous **Jaws** ostinato would do 20 years hence.” The score opens with “deceptively frivolous woodwinds meandering across the sound of a tolling bell, until growling monster footsteps from brass plot into view, escorted by a wash of vicious orchestration and snarling winds that informs us directly that all is not well for whom that bell tolls. Pizzicato xylophone is used to herald the mutation of the undersea life. The Phantom’s ostinato emerges one last time from the midst of orchestral chaos when the bomb explodes, having the final words as both creature and theme dissolve into a final briefly sustained chord. In “Turtle Migration” an eerie keyboard tonality under acoustic guitar and a glissando of harp create an apprehensive mood.”

Sea Mutants

- **Creature from the Black Lagoon** (Stein) – The score’s most striking moments consist of “a discordant, blaring theme for trumpets, built around an ascending, three-note, shouting brass motif ...heard whenever the Creature attacks; a harsh and unexpected blare that literally jolts us out of our seats and provides an electrifying punch to the picture.” One reviewer described this repeated, three-note crashing crescendo theme as **da-DA-DAA**. Another reviewer described this three-note Creature theme as **BAH-BAH-BAHHH!** The last note is actually a three-note, half-step cluster chord referred to simply as the three-note theme that is so closely associated with the Gill-Man. A third reviewer articulated this three-note figure with dissonance at the end as **Bom-ba-BOM**. A fourth reviewer wrote that this “shrill, three-note brass stinger for the monster” is “one of the most instantly recognizable and effective pieces of ‘scary’ music ever heard in the movies.” The score “moves seamlessly from impressionistic repose to outright chaos as the monster alternately hides in its swampy natural surroundings and launches its attack to the tune of Salter’s snarling brass trills.”

Stein’s “Kay and the Monster, Part 2” picks up the action with gong followed by low instruments

playing the Creature theme as the Gill-Man swims around Kay's kicking legs. "Brass crescendos with trilling woodwinds and strings accent the three times the Creature reaches out to touch Kay...and when Kay submerges and the Creature retreats from sight, rhythmic low instruments remind us she is still not safe. After Kay resurfaces, the 'Creature Advancing' theme plays on low strings, bass clarinet, and bassoon, and as the Gill-Man watches her, brass and gong build the suspense.... The music calms...but... as...Kay...swims toward the 'Rita' [the expedition's boat] with the Creature below her, the orchestra plays an increasingly powerful reprise of the 'Creature advancing' theme.... The Creature theme sounds just before Kay climbs safely on board, intensifying that last moment when we fear the beast will reach out and grab her."

- **Humanoids from the Deep** (Horner) - The "[Main Titles](#)" and "End Credits" tracks provide two examples of the score's omnipresent elements: an echoing trumpet motif similar to that in Jerry Goldsmith's score for **Patton**, an almost childlike penny-whistle melody, and a boinging synthesizer.
- **Waterworld** (Howard) – This score "captures... 'water' in an impressionistic setting," giving the music "an ethereal quality which makes the watery dance between the Mariner and little Enoa that much more effective."
- **Splash** (Holdridge) – A beautiful love theme ("Love Came For Me") conveys the love between the film's two protagonists, with this melody used for both the underwater and on land love scenes.
- **Aquamarine** (Hirschfelder) – "Main Titles" accompanies an underwater camera "pov shot" maneuvering "through sea life and coral formations" with the use of "piccolo (with a hint of Celtic music for the mermaid themes)."
- **The She Creature** (Reynolds) – Reynolds provided a "highly atmospheric" score for this film based on "strings, harp and choir" as heard in the "Mermaid Theme" – a track "created using samples. The score also has a haunting or alluring quality especially prominent in the "Mermaid Theme".

Sea Battles

- **Moby Dick** (Sainton) – "[Main Title](#)" encapsulates themes to represent Captain Ahab, Moby Dick, and the friendship between Queequeg and Ishmael, while weaving "a graphic portrait of turbulent, heaving, cross-waved seas whipped by gales." In "[Ahab's Introduction](#)," an "almost malevolent restlessness in the orchestra with a hammering motif first sounded in the [Main Title](#) conveys Captain Ahab's dark obsession with Moby Dick." This cue plunges us "deeper into the abyss...and we are left in no doubt about the man's compulsive obsession with hunting down Moby Dick; the music positively exudes malice."
- **Moby Dick** (Gordon) – "[Call Me Ishmael](#)" provides "a wonderfully memorable main theme that swirls up from the opening" to convey the nautical adventure to come. "[Jonah and the Whale](#)" is scored with occasionally "weird, unerring chords [that] denote the eventual doom of the ship and her crew." While the film hardly has any underwater scenes, Gordon's score conveys not only the story's setting at sea but also beneath the waves with "[The Devil Himself](#)" capturing the whale's "almost supernatural power."

- **The Lost Continent** (Schurmann) – “[Carnivorous Seaweed / Death of Hurri Curri](#)” accompanies the ship’s lifeboat drifts into a morass of seaweed. The ship’s steward, earlier wounded during a mutiny of the crew, is seized with delirium and plunges into the venomous weed. “Oppressive nether orchestral textures conjure the fetid morass – while stark, angular, stinging exclamations aptly embody the weed’s lethal properties.” The stinging exclamations are again heard later in “Execution” as the Inquisitor, the ruler of the lost continent, sentences several of his subjects to be hurled into a pit of carnivorous seaweed as “spasms of brass unleash the deadly weed’s lacerating motif.”
- **The Old Man and The Sea** (Tiomkin) – The score has motifs for the ocean (as initially heard in the main title theme “The Old Man and the Sea”), a lengthy cue underscoring Santiago’s battle with the marlin (“The Duel with the Fish”) and the fisherman’s fight to save the marlin from making the shark’s day (“The Shark Fight”).
- **Jaws** (Williams) – Perhaps the classic score for illustrating a composer’s application of the leitmotif device is the score Williams provided for **Jaws**. There’s an E followed by an F, played by six cello and three basses. With a deceptive aural transition from the quiet slap of water and the clanging of a far-off marker buoy, Williams created a starkly powerful shark theme with these two simple notes. “To this day,” as the film’s director (Spielberg) stated, “just hearing those two notes...immediately conjures shark, adrenaline and second thoughts about swimming.” Williams hit upon the idea of using the “low thumping notes” as the score’s basis: “I thought that altering the speed and volume of the theme, from very slow to very fast, from very soft to very loud, would indicate the mindless attacks of the shark.”

Another motif in Williams’ score utilizes notes played on harp as heard in cues including “[Main Title](#),” “[Chrissie’s Death](#),” “[The First Victim](#),” “[The Indianapolis Story](#)” (or “[Quint’s Tale](#)”), “[Sea Attack Number One](#),” “[Night Search](#),” and “[The Underwater Siege](#).” This motif conveys suspense about what lies beneath the ocean’s surface. Interestingly, Williams’ score incorporates the harp in cues accompanying both quiet (suspense) and busy (action) sequences; in the absence of the “da-dum” shark theme, the harp flourishes remind that we are not far from the underwater environment from which the shark may surface at any moment.

- **Tintorera: Killer Shark** (Poledouris) – Randall Larson provided the following analysis of the shark-related portions of Poledouris’ score for this film. “Basil successfully steered away from any musical reference to JAWS in his TINTORERA score, which was indeed a challenge in the wake of John Williams’ incredibly successful music for JAWS. In its Main Title, TINTORERA opens with the low growling drone of a Moog synthesizer, accompanied by percussion and keyboard dappled by some whale-like sounds in high register and other, unidentifiable underwater noises, coming from far away – and finally some metallic tapping sounds as the cue comes to its end. ... [This scoring] opens the film. That version’s music occurs throughout the score in underwater scenes in which the tiger shark appears, attacks, or is referenced.”
- **Jaws 2** (Williams) – “[Finding the Orca \(Main Title\)](#)” plays as several divers swim underwater during the film’s opening sequence and discover the remains of a boat (the *Orca* from the first film). A quote of the “Orca” theme from **Jaws** along with the famous shark motif (a two-note rhythmic figure in the basses) is heard as a shark attacks the divers.

- **Jaws 3-D** (Parker) – Parker’s original theme for **Jaws 3-D** is introduced in the “[Main Title](#)” (“Jaws 3-D”) and then underscores several action scenes, these cues arranged with a driving (repetitive) beat occasionally interspersed with Williams’ “da-dum” theme to signal the imminent arrival of the mother Shark. While the main motif is exactly the same as Williams’ (basses and cellos), Parker commented that he “did a different horn thing for [his] own shark theme that would have a slight edge to it. There are two Great Whites here, a mother and a baby. So I wanted the score to differentiate their identities and level of threat. While their motif is the same, the baby has a lighter presence with two horns, woodwinds and strings. And when the mother comes in, she’s scored with six horns and the entire trombone section. It’s music that has more ‘weight.’ It’s the difference between saying one shark isn’t too bad and then suddenly hitting the audience between the eyes with something bigger and nastier.”
- **Jaws The Revenge** (Small) – Small begins his score with his own adaptation of Williams’ classic **Jaws** theme, “a particularly fierce rendition adding a musical sound effect like a monstrous roar. This helps set up the imminent killing of Sean Brody, one of the most brutal and prolonged shark attack sequences in the entire series.” “[Moray Eel](#)” combines some violins in the high registers with some interesting percussive effects to convey the underwater presence and attack of a moray eel. “[The Shark](#)” accompanies an underwater chase as Small shapes Williams’ original material into “syncopated octatonic developments, along with his own synth motive later taken up by a full string section.”
- **Orca** (Morricone) – The score’s first thematic approach – a main theme heard in “[Orca](#),” “[Nocturne for a Remorse](#),” and “[Orca \(Finale\)](#)” – embodies the personalities and emotions of the film’s cetacean and human protagonists. Flowing strings, harpsichord, and wordless female vocal emphasize the romantic and sorrowful emotions of the whale and the human protagonist. This main theme is “first heard very subtly under the main titles, played by a solo woodwind and accompanied by the sounds of a humpback whale. The main theme then grows into a full orchestra for the first scenes of the two whales swimming playfully together.” “Strings dominate the music, flowing in a beautiful melody that at this time in the film is very inspiring, adding life and love to the whales as they swim about on the screen.” The second thematic approach focuses on what one reviewer described as “the vengeance factor” and another as “the Suspense-and-Attack motif.” For this motif, Morricone uses atonal music to underscore the havoc that a male killer whale creates after the bloody death of its pregnant mate, and the ensuing battle of wits between the fisherman and the whale. This music is comprised of “slow, deep strings coupled with weird, slashing percussion effects, and occasional additions of organ, quickly sputtering brass chords, chilling high-pitched spiraling strings, and plucked violins.”
- **The Great White** (Stevens) – The cue “[Main Title](#)” presents a main theme that dramatically conveys a sense of the delirium or madness inherent in the shark hunters’ battles with **The Great White**.
- **Tentacoli** (Cipriani) – Cipriani composed several underwater-related cues, notably, “[The Killer Whales’ Games](#)” and “[Tentacles](#)” on the score album, the instrumentation conveying the menace of the deadly octopus through “an effective underwater suspense motif for piano, synthesizer and percussion effects.”
- **The Beast (TV)** (Davis) – One reviewer wrote that this film’s score sounds “like it was written by the numbers, with ominous strains signaling the approach of the monster and sudden crescendi informing of the unforeseen attacks on humans.”

- **Piranha** (Donaggio) – The cue “Piranhas Upon Us” is “furious and descriptive of the mutant fish.”
- **Killer Crocodile** (Ortolani) – One reviewer noted that the score’s “[Main Theme](#)” “rather quickly” reminds one of “the repetitive ‘da dum’ theme that John Williams composed for the shark in **Jaws**.” Another reviewer referred to Ortolani’s score as a “decent **Jaws** ripoff score.” A third reviewer similarly commented not only that the film was a ripoff of **Jaws** but also that “even the music is just John Williams’ theme with one or two different notes to avoid a lawsuit.” Finally, another review commented: “There is the obligatory **JAWS** sounding cue within the soundtrack that accompanies the hulking beast of a croc and announces his entrance, his attack and also his departure back into the dark depths of the murky river. Plenty of driving strings are present throughout the work, and a fair amount of what [the reviewer refers] to as tense lurking music, i.e., the croc is hiding in the weeds so the composer underlines this with a dark but subtle musical presence, which gradually builds into a full blown version of the predator’s theme as it positions itself to strike at its unsuspecting victim.”
- **Creature** (Van Tongeren) – “Another timbre,” wrote composer Van Tongeren “is a percussive prepared piano palette to supply the urgency and attitude of the situation, usually associated with the Creature. A jagged three note motif was the basis for the Creature, presented in various forms and meters throughout the score.”
- **Anaconda** (Edelman) – “Anaconda (Main Title)” introduces “the first of the film’s recurring elements—a wandering, floating flute melody which wafts above Edelman’s trademarked synth lines and string figures to create an ambience redolent of the jungle and its mysterious, unknowable qualities. ‘Watching and Waiting’ . . . is tense and nervous, and heralds the second recurring element—a dangerous-sounding five-note brass leitmotif for the film’s slithering bad guy.”
- **Lake Placid** (Ottman) – One reviewer found “no . . . distinct musical treatment is introduced to characterize the monster (a huge alligator) – the low brass isn’t unique enough.” While another reviewer noted that the “Swimming with Croc” cue “references Williams’ **Jaws** theme,” the score does not achieve “the stomach-churning terror [of that] infamous Jaws motif.” But a third reviewer felt that “Ottman comes close enough with his powerful and . . . varied musical shock effects. He uses considerable resource and ingenuity. The swirling currents, the watery patterns of light and shade, and the murky depths of the lake are very vividly evoked together with a hidden presence of danger that you feel will leap out at you at any second. Ottman uses deep tuba, fluttering higher brass, numerous swift-stated, staccato, dotted rhythm chords, twisting, curling, gyrating figures on harp and strings, clanking metallic and dead wooden block strokes to evoke water disturbed by the giant beast, its swift, silent passage and its sudden, deadly attacks.”
- **Anacondas-The Hunt for the Blood Orchid** (Tyson-Chew) – One reviewer offered the following observation on this score: “A well balanced mixing causes even the low-level groans and snarls of percussion and base strings—presumably the sounds of the snakes in preparation of a nice meal—to be easily audible despite the best efforts of the brass section to steal the show.”
- **Rogue** (Tetaz) – One reviewer noted that the film is “heightened by its accompanying score, which relies heavily on a powerful string ensemble. In **Rogue**, you will hear almost everything that can be done with a group of strings: from soft and dramatic themes, to melodic ostinatos, to frenzied and

dissonant shrieks, to a low and aggressive motif that emulates the growling of an actual crocodile!”

- **Piranha 3D** (Wandmacher) – One reviewer was surprised how heavily Wandmacher’s score focused on action: “It can easily be mistaken for an action score at times, but it does have plenty of chills, perhaps most with the Piranha theme. It’s a 4-note motif that sounds like little knives or perhaps little teeth gnawing away at their victims. It starts high and goes lower in progression. Fantastic in the movie, and you immediately recognize the prehistoric fish coming your way.”
- **Sharktopus (TV)** (Hiel) – “When the sharktopus first escapes its captivity, the music builds to a rising tide with its central motif, surrounded by tentacular eddies of swirling accentuations. . . . Hiel’s SHARKTOPUS score is rooted in a recurring 4-note, rising motif that is heard each time the Sharktopus is threatening or about to attack. Hiel elaborated:

Many times I was able to build that motif for a while as the attacks became imminent. When the Sharktopus did attack, I tended to use rising chromatic stabs over brass chords (alternating from lower brass to horns and trumpets) and heavy percussion loops. Also I used glissando effects and sampled sounds (a garden rake across metal) to accentuate the horrific elements of the attacks. After the attacks or when the action was slow, but where I wanted the audience to think Sharktopus might be around, I used this electronic pulsing loop that really adds another sonic dimension of creepiness for me.

That pulsing synth loop in SHARKTOPUS becomes Hiel’s JAWS ostinato, a recurring measure that adds a strident undercurrent of menace as the story plays out.

- **Bait** (Ng and Oh) – “Crabs” is “a wickedly sardonic track as another character tries to make a getaway and winds up with a face-full of scuttling arthropods, the pensive set-up music erupting into a confluence of scrabbling strings, drums, and the abrupt incursion of the shark attack theme. . . . The composers generate satisfying suspense and shock at those shark attack moments – and any composer scoring such a scene after **JAWS** has a terrific and thankless challenge to avoid any kind of reference in rhythm and tone to that famous score, which Ng and Oh manage quite well with their use of growing bundles of strings, gathering percussion, wrapped in a sinewy cartilage of tenuous strings growing ever more taught beneath rolling waves of timpani (‘Shark Bait,’ ‘Get Out of the Water,’ ‘Shark Encounter,’ the climactic ‘Shotgun and Electric Shark’); this more dissonant material is nicely handled both in the orchestration and the performance, maintaining a driving sensibility of panic, peril, and power without becoming too discordant.”

Sea Buddies

- **Ti-Koyo E Il Suo Pescecane** (DeMasi) – For this film DeMasi provided a theme for the [shark \(Manidu\)](#).
- **The Day of the Dolphin** (Delerue) – At the score’s heart is the love theme that Delerue composed to reflect the scientist’s ability to communicate with the dolphin. “With its poignant flute, plucked harp and lush strings, the music has a serene, floating beauty, recalling Claude Debussy’s *La Mer* in its ability to convey the ocean currents.” In “Main Title,” “Delerue’s effect of musical sonar plays over a string tremolo, as a close-up of Alpha fills the widescreen frame.”

Delerue used the Ondes Martenot with the Bronté (a similar electronic instrument, which could also be played with a bow) to create another “underwater” signature for **The Day of the Dolphin**. This “tank” motif has the quality of echoed, metal percussion. “Together, the tank and sonar motifs become our ears to the world of the two dolphins (Alpha and Beta), where the sound they hear and communicate with takes on an eerie quality as if refracted through musical water. While Delerue’s sonar is almost tranquil in how it represents the dolphins, his tank motif has a harsher sound, making it all the more effective in convey[ing] the lurking threat of the Foundation. Both sonar and tank motifs are used throughout the score, solely and intertwining. And as they play off Delerue’s strings, **The Day of the Dolphin** takes on a haunting, otherworldly quality that makes it unique among the composer’s soundtracks.”

- **A Whale for the Killing** (Poledouris) – The secondary theme of Poledouris’ score for this film “evoked the marine animal in both its magnificence and its tragic circumstances. This compelling theme is often played intimately on violin but also taken by powerful and somber horns, its melody rich in yearning, as if conveying the heart of the wounded whale in its delicate lyricism, and its graceful movement through the waves with its undulating rhythm.”
- **Andre** (Rowland) – The music heard in the score’s main melody (“[Seal Ballet](#)”) “undulates on a gentle tide of violins, the higher end strings taking the melody over a rhythmic surge of lower violas, cellos and a twinkling harp. [‘Obsession’](#) lets the theme resound beautifully, high end violins suggesting the voice of the whale. First in [‘Awakening’](#) and later in [‘Redemption’](#), Poitras’ voice gives the cues a powerful tonality, her throaty voice speaking the whale’s outrage against the hunters. ... [Eidelman] eloquently captured the musical world of the whale with an intensely beautiful score.”
- **Loch Ness** (Jones) – Jones composed “an ominous Monster theme, most often performed by low brass. It represents the monster as well as the Loch’s mystery and inherent danger. This theme is most relevant in light of John’s violent first counter with the creature.”
- **Finding Nemo** (Newman) – This score “displays [Newman’s] invention and talent.... Inspired by the variety of plant and animal life in Australian seas, Newman uses unique instruments (including water and fin) and recurring melodies to distinguish clownfish tyke Nemo, his anxious father Marlin, and forgetful, cheery Dory. This playfulness extends to minor characters, too, like the fearsome young Darla, identified with a discordant slash of strings straight out of **Psycho** when she appears. ... Newman unites keyboards and percussion with sparse tones of natural and synthesized instruments to create a dreamy world we’ve never visited before.” [Keaveney](#) provided the following analysis:

The album opens with “[Wow](#)” [that] states Newman’s main theme, a delicate riff.... The theme is given generous play throughout the score (“[Nemo Egg](#)”..., “[Stay Awake](#)”, “[News Travels](#)” and “[Fronds Like These](#)”). It’s warm, gooey, usually on strings, with a bit of piano for punctuation. ... That accessible Newman sound is quickly joined by...guitar whimsy (“[First Day](#)”, “[Field Trip](#)”, “[Curl Away My Son](#)”). ...martial string and snare rhythm ...make an appearance in the cute “Mr. Ray, Scientist”, and...dramatic brass...dribbles into the dissonant “[The Divers](#)”. Other major motifs include a funky-dreary piano motif that usually underscores moments of tension (“[Lost](#)”, “[Swim Down](#)”), another is a bold brass fanfare (“[The Turtle Lope](#)”, “[Darla Filth Offramp](#)”, “[Time To Let Go](#)”).

Newman proves he can mickey-mouse with the best of them, adding comedic gestures in “[Short-Term Dory](#)” and kid-friendly menace in “Friends Not Food” (using what sounds like synth strings), and “[Mt. Wannahockalooogie](#)”. ...Thomas sounds like his brother [Randy Newman] in the opening of “[Darla Filth Offramp](#)” - the bristling string rhythm with brass blasts and jittery percussion line. There are plenty of oddball moments here too: Newman channels ‘60s lounge with an Ennio Morricone-like flute riff in “Foolproof”; pseudo-surf rock in “[The Turtle Lope](#)”, which is reprised briefly in “[Darla Filth Offramp](#)” and swaggering guitar riffs and bongos overtop string pizz in “[Scum Angel](#)”.

- **Lady in the Water** (Howard) - The [title theme](#) represents “the Blue World and is as magnificent during its performances by solo instrument as it is by the full ensemble and choir. It’s simple, deliberate chord progressions are basic enough for an Enya song, but when orchestrated as well as it has been in **Lady in the Water**, that simplicity of harmony brings pure joy and easy recognizability during each of its uses. Most importantly, the Blue World theme is stated liberally throughout the score, ranging from very slight meanderings of its parts by celesta and piano in some cues to explosive full-ensemble pronouncements in robust, hair-raising fantasy fashion in other parts.”

Sea Subs (Fantasy Subs)

- **20,000 Leagues under the Sea** (Smith) – Smith’s score opens with the “[Main Title](#)” that provides a dramatic fanfare introducing a sustained movement, with stirring modulations, conveying that one is listening to music about the sea. Later, as the visitors and crew explore Nemo’s undersea gardens, we hear “a watery variation on the ‘Whale’ tune [earlier sung by Land as ‘A Whale of a Tale’] and some ominous/action music for the shark sequence.”
- **Mysterious Island** (Herrmann) – When the balloon of the protagonists collapses, stranding them on a Pacific island, they are attacked by a “[Giant Crab](#)” accompanied by “the animated, rhythmic piping of...eight horns, climaxing in a series of high, frenzied glissandos.” Herrmann presses “the entire orchestra into service, with each section...seemingly moving and sounding like a separate uncontrollable limb of the beast—strutting strings, sharp angular woodwind and brass, irregularly placed percussion, screaming horns and flutes—until the overall effect is of an outsize[d] automatron, circuits wild, embarking on an insane mechanized rampage.”

When our protagonists are outfitted with underwater breathing apparatus and descend to the sea floor to repair the hull of the pirate ship, a giant octopus encircles one of the divers, entangling him in its tenacious tentacles. Herrmann scores this scene with “a sonorous tour de force for oily woodwinds and snarling brass, rumbling in their nethermost registers, murky motifs unwind wildly like lashing tentacles, the music ever extending, ever sprawling, the darkly nebulous tone clusters punctuated by ferocious interjections from massed percussion.”

- **Captain Nemo and the Underwater City** (Morley) – When a shark suddenly bears down on the swimmers, “Shark Fight” accompanies with “agitated string patterns, swelling brass and sporadic wood block. Mala stabs at the predator with a knife, the cue reaching an explanatory climax when she deals it a crippling blow. The music dies down mysteriously as the bleeding shark retreats.” In another cue, “Lead Up to Mobula Attack,” “stabbing brass and swirling accompaniment return as the creature

approaches the site, sending the divers into disarray. When the Nautilus takes defensive action and harpoons the Mobula, Morley balances the aggressive monster music with bustling strings, wavering horns and the processional theme for Nemo and his crew.”

- **The Mysterious Island of Captain Nemo** (Ferrio) – The score’s highlight cue is “[Mysterious Island](#)” first heard during the film’s opening title sequence that shows the beauty and tranquility of underwater marine life, a world to which Captain Nemo has escaped in his submarine Nautilus.
- **20,000 Leagues under the Sea** (Scott) – Scott’s score is “nicely nautical” with “a surging, brass-driven main theme carried...by strings and winds” to represent the overall Nemo/Nautilus theme. Scott identifies this theme as a generic theme for the incredible submarine *Nautilus*:

The theme has a sense of mystery; it’s all about Nemo and his underwater world. ... I saw Nemo as wandering the ocean, a type of underwater *Flying Dutchman*. During that theme there was a descending arpeggio with flute and percussion. ... That was an idea that came from the feeling of the *Nautilus* submarine. You know, the sonar kind of rebounding. I know they didn’t have sonar in those days, but I saw it as a kind of submarine motif. You hear this thing and you think of below the waters (John Scott).

“Monster from the Depths” “evokes deep chordal passages from bassoon and a flurry of ascending strings, violins swirling about each of the giant squid’s tentacular appendages as Scott pushes for a new theme specifically for the undersea creature.” As “Ned Slays the Monster,” piping woodwinds accompany as “Ned’s theme does battle with the squid’s theme under chorus and surging brass and swirling violins.”

- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea (TV)** (Sawtell) – Sawtell, who scored 1961’s **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea**, was re-hired to write a new theme for the TV series of the same name and the pilot episode (“[Eleven Days to Zero](#)”). He composed “[The Seaview Theme](#)”—an opening fanfare scored as “a brass figure representing the awesome sub. Written in waltz time, the music quickly descended (a la the trip to the bottom) over a bass line suggestive of a sonar sound, and featured harp glissandi in the time-honored tradition of Debussy and other composers who have written music about the sea. All of this in under 30 seconds...; the end title, at 40 seconds, was a bit more developed.” One reviewer described this piece as having “a beautifully orchestrated ringing effect that perfectly counterpointed the Seaview’s distinctive sonar ping sound and led into a memorable disjunctive brass theme for the submarine, with variations submerged in harp glissandos and other ‘underwater’-type effects.”
- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea (TV – Season 2)** (Goldsmith) – For this TV series’ second season, composer Jerry Goldsmith was commissioned to write a new theme for the season’s first episode “Jonah and the Whale.” What Goldsmith composed was “in stark contrast to the upbeat Sawtell signature: dark and foreboding, relying largely on brass, keyboards and percussion – music that reflected less the majesty of the Seaview than the unknown mysteries lying at the bottom of the ocean and beyond.” Goldsmith wove his theme throughout this score, with the three-note motif being repeated regularly as the theme for the Seaview and its crew. One reviewer of this score characterized Goldsmith’s approach as “unusual...a three-note brass fanfare that repeated over a plodding rhythm

for harp and a gong-rather scary descent into the deep.”

- **Around the World under the Sea** (Sukman) – Sukman’s loving strings convey the serenity of the sea, while his “angry” timpani conjures up the frightened and fantastic pictures of impending disaster and danger. His jolly woodwinds blow eerily for the giant eel sequence. . . . They also combine in a pompously-frisky arrangement for yet another unique band [track], the ballad for a dolphin.”
- **InnerSpace** (Goldsmith) – The “Main Title” is heard as “the camera floats through what appears to be some crystalline, microscopic void. Goldsmith introduces two rhythmic elements of the score: a thrumming heartbeat, obviously designed to convey the idea of being inside a human circulatory system, and a wispy, sonar-like ping later associated with the miniaturization chip that will eventually put pilot Tuck Pendleton in the body of grocery clerk Jack Putter. . . .the sci-fi soundscape develops (with the eerie, glassy sound of waterphones and random drumbeats adding to the texture).”
- **Fantastic Voyage** (Rosenman) – The score’s primary motif (“[The Proteus](#)”) is heard as the crew reacts for the first time to their view of blood corpuscles outside the windows of the submarine immediately after the sub has been injected into Benes. “Rosenman adds layers of individualistic lines from harp, strings and woodwinds to characterize the numerous living elements of the bloodstream as well as some impressionistic writing for flute for a mysterious luminescent element briefly glimpsed outside the vessel. The four-note motif emerges out of the chaos, played by high strings and flutes as we see a wide external shot of the submarine—a technique Rosenman employs throughout the film.”

Sea Subs (War Subs)

- **The Hunley** (Edelman) – As one reviewer noted, the “bugle solos [heard in “[Waves of Brotherhood](#)] . . .signal the loneliness of the underwater grave that awaits the crew of the Hunley.”
- **Hell and High Water** (Newman) – For the submarine theme, Newman drew on a theme [previously composed for the film **Vigil in the Night** (1940)] heard in multiple cues, including “[The Sub Heads Out](#),” “The Voyage Continues.” and “Heading North.” “[Testing the Sub](#)” features orchestration in the low registers that conveys the tension of a submarine being put to the test underwater. One observer noted that the best parts of the score are “the many suspenseful passages as the submarine and its communist counterpart play a deadly game of cat and mouse. Newman and his orchestrator, Edward Powell, employ an impressive range of muted musical colours, involving low woodwinds contending with the brass or else overlain with insistent sustained single notes high in the violins (as in ‘The Ocean Floor’).”
- **The Enemy Below** (Harline) – Harline’s score highlights the tactical operations and maneuvers between the dueling warships with powerful low brass music—“punchy trombone motifs”—for the German sub and a stirring main theme and rousing military music for the U.S. destroyer. Harline puts the film’s primary conflict in sharp relief with his main title music: “A brisk naval march for the American destroyer is nearly knocked off its gait by the disruptive low brass chords that represent the German submarine (foreshadowing the film’s climax). . . . The full statement of the submarine motif is heard in ‘The Submarine,’ and ‘Periscope Depth’ as a jagged series of heavy, low brass chords (dominated by trombones) sometimes played against a four note, jeopardy-laden brass theme. . . .this

secondary theme for the sub becomes increasingly dominant in the later action sequences, undergoing a great deal of variation and development.... The chordal approach to shots of the submarine emphasizes the menace of the enemy vessel while suggesting the crushing pressure (both physical and psychological) below the ocean surface; Harline reinforces this with low strings and woodwinds in 'The Bottom' as the German crew sinks their vessel to the ocean floor to hide from the pursuing destroyer." In "Torpedoes," "the German 'fish' are given a shrill note sting for brass over high-itched, tense strings and cymbal hisses."

- **On the Beach** (Gold) – Stanley Kramer, the film's director, required Gold to use "the traditional Australian song 'Waltzing Matilda' as his main theme. ... Gold personally loathed the song but decided to view its use as a challenge: 'I said I'm going to call upon all my skills as a composer by variation, reharmonization, development, every musical device that I was aware of, to use that as a bit of thematic material and confine it essentially to say 'Australia,'" he told *CinemaScore* magazine in 1981. ... 'Waltzing Matilda' thus becomes not just a predictable musical marker for Australia, but a playful romantic tune for Moira, both an anthem and a dirge for humanity, and the voice of the small, daily traditions that the film's characters turn to and embrace in order to deal with the prospect of their imminent demise."
- **On the Beach** (Gordon) – Gordon's score is broken into five suites after opening with the powerful overture ("The World at War"), an overture for a war between America and China. In the epic scaled cue, two motifs are introduced. The first is what one might refer to as the "war motif" or "submarine theme" – an ominous 8-note motif performed on low brass and sometimes deep strings that appears in many key moments of the score whenever something suspenseful takes place. The third suite ("Message from the North") plays as plans begin to seek out a place where there is less radiation, where a selected number of people may be able to survive. In "Voyage North" the submarine theme returns as a submarine sets out to get reports of the conditions in the North Pole. The heroic theme also returns but this time in a less fanfare way, as with its first performance in "The World at War." This time it is nobler as people put faith in the submarine quest.
- **Ice Station Zebra** (Legrand) – The score is comprised of "two parts, sometimes heard separately: a long, surprisingly warm melody associated with the film's story as a whole, a second melody for the nuclear submarine Tigerfish derived from a four-note fanfare motive." On the film's cue sheet, the latter of these two themes was titled "Water Theme" while the former was noted as "Theme from *Ice Station Zebra*." These two themes are heard on the film's soundtrack CD in the first cue "[Overture](#)": "an elongated melody that will become associated with the mission..., then the emphatic fanfare-based 'water theme' that will become associated with American submarine. The two melodies are heard as counterpoint to one another, with trumpets driving both themes to an exciting climax. A coda begins quietly with solo woodwinds and strings before sustained brass chords quickly build the volume once again."
- **Das Boot (The Boat)** (Doldinger) – The opening track, titled "The Boat," introduces the submarine's theme, "a slow seven note adagio for celli over an ominous synthetic rumbling as the evil pointed bow of the vessel lumbers out of a murky grey backdrop and passes over the camera, reaching a crescendo as the stern ship slips out of sight at the top of the screen."

- **Crimson Tide** (Zimmer) – The score’s main title “is the soul of the submarine, first being heard with great power as the crew boards [and later] as the crew rescues the ship, the theme bursts out once again with incredible authority.”

Sea Spies

- **Never Say Never Again** (Legrand) – Legrand’s score for this film provides “slashing string music for the shark chase ([“Fight to the Death with the Tiger Sharks”](#)).

Sea Treasures


- **Beneath the 12-Mile Reef** (Herrmann) – “An ominous sustained pedal from electric organ and low brass signals the approach of a giant octopus [[“The Octopus”](#)]. The previously docile harps turn sinister, as Herrmann employs low-range pedal glissandi and directs the musicians to play with picks, creating an unsettling percussive effect. Glissing, muted trombones add to the suspense until the music explodes in agitated, overlapping chromatic half-step descents...as Tony slays the animal in a murk of ink and blood. This cue is a masterpiece of color which stays true to the underwater setting by altering volume and density while maintaining a relatively static tempo.”

Sea Escapes

- **The Poseidon Adventure** (Williams) – Williams’ score for this film includes two powerful melodies for horns: first, a bittersweet opening fanfare that becomes an elegiac motif for the noble sacrifices made by the film’s central characters; and second, a variation played over a surging, six-note rhythmic motif that speaks to their indomitable spirit. The title music compellingly combines the movie’s themes of heroism and tragedy. “The opening title music ingeniously establishes the threatening power of the ocean (with a rumbling, repeating double-bass figure), the majesty of the ocean liner (with a soaring fanfare for French horns), and the desperate pathos of the adventure ahead. The theme recurs throughout the score, urging the passengers on through the various deathtraps devised by [producer Irwin] Allen and screenwriters. Most of the interior score is dark and atmospheric, with staccato low piano playing and overpowering attack cues for some of the more violent situations. . . . Williams’ motivic use of harps and atonal effects...foreshadow his scoring of some of the more terrifying sequences in *Jaws*. ...for the most part his score for *The Poseidon Adventure* drives home a single-minded approach befitting a film whose characters are interested in only one thing: getting out alive.”
- **Gray Lady Down** (Fielding) – One observer noted that this film was tricky to score, because much of the action takes place in extremely confined spaces. Fielding’s [“Main Title”](#) sets the tone admirably with an insistent motif that bespeaks the ocean’s limitless scope and power.
- **Titanic** (Horner) – One reviewer identified three motifs in this score: shipwreck/memory music, pounding action-film music, and soaring adventure music. The first motif (shipwreck/memory) is introduced in [“Distant Memories”](#) which “brings to the fore all the mystery of the ship that lies two and a half miles below the Atlantic’s surface. It’s a quiet, introspective piece that builds into grandeur and wonder.”
- **Leviathan** (Goldsmith) – Goldsmith makes “no attempt to characterize the monsters acoustically”,

resorting to “glistening shock chords [that] erupt every time a CGI tentacle jumps into the frame.”

- **The Abyss** (Silvestri) – One reviewer commented that Silvestri used “standard” scoring techniques, “in particular the composer’s own trademarked bombastic horn punches...are used to represent the human elements of the film.”
- **DeepStar Six** (Manfredini) – In “Main Title,” the opening credit music combines ocean motives with a heroic theme played by French horn. “In many respects,” wrote Manfredini, “the depths of the ocean are as amazing and mysterious as outer space. There is a strange beauty and calm, yet there seems to be a constant motion.”
- **Sphere** (Goldenthal) – One reviewer identifies three different dramatic angles from which Goldenthal approached the film’s score: the ambience of the underwater setting, the beauty of the space ship, and the rawness of the action. Of these, the reviewer described the first (the ambience of the underwater setting) as the score’s “underwater-style music,” first heard accompanying the film’s opening credits (“[Main Titles](#)”). This, the reviewer opined, was both “a smart choice and a slightly frustrating one. By starting with this music, Goldenthal wisely sets up the mysterious drifting mood of the submerged setting a good 15 to 20 minutes before the characters take the plunge. It also keeps a nice lid on things so that when we cut directly to the punchier cues under the helicopter trip, there’s a notable shift in moods. . . . To Goldenthal’s credit, he does come up with some other music-as-immersion ideas that are more interesting, most noticeably a nervous pizzicato figure in the low strings that provides a welcome reprieve in styles.”
- **Deep Rising** (Goldsmith) – One reviewer described the monster motif as having been scored with a menacing two-note repetition of the trombones. Another reviewer similarly noted this musical allusion in a “menacing descending brass motif for the sea monster” that appears in three cues: “Lost Communication,” “Wet Repairs,” and “[Wall of Water](#)”. A third reviewer noted the monster motif in the “[Underwater Grave](#)” track that opens the soundtrack CD “with atmospheric electronic sounds, followed by the brassy 50’s style monster motif (utilizing the tritonus interval) before the percussive, surprisingly modern, main theme occurs. . . . The most charming aspect of the score is Goldsmith’s straightforward monster theme, which reminds me of the brassy cult classics of the fifties.”
- **Deep Blue Sea** (Rabin) – Rabin scored the “genetically modified super sharks with similar sinister tones to the asteroid in *Armageddon*.” As one observer noted: “There will be soothing, peaceful segments that are suddenly, horribly destroyed by the musical cataclysm that represents the attacking sharks. You can tell exactly when...the sharks appear by the sudden synth flourishes that sometimes knock you out of your seat, they’re so sudden and effective. It is as if sharks are trying to eat their way through your speakers, and it can be very scary.”
- **Poseidon** (Badelt) – One reviewer wrote that the only score cues worth mentioning “are the first and last: “[The Poseidon](#)” introduces a rousing, noble theme for the ill-fated yacht, anchored by bright horn performances, swelling strings, a strumming acoustic guitar, and underpinned by a mass of synth beats and percussion effects; ‘[Escape](#)’...has a sense of triumphant victory coupled with a sense of relief to depict the survivors’ success against the odds, and a nice performance of a stately, reflective string theme.”



SENSE OF DEPTH OR PRESSURE – This can entail placing microphones close to instruments when a musical passage is being recorded to convey a feeling of being surrounded or a sense of pressure. On the other hand, by placing microphones at a greater distance from the orchestra, one can convey a sense of space or openness for scenes where the action is above water. Another approach to indicate depth in the water is for one part of the orchestra to play notes in a low register, while another part of the orchestra plays notes in a higher register, thereby creating a sense of spatial dimension in a body of water (e.g., ocean, lake, river) between being closer to the surface or the bottom of a body of water.

Sea Mutants

- **Humanoids from the Deep** (Horner) – One reviewer noted that much of Horner’s score “lingers in the murky depths.”

Sea Battles

- **Jaws The Revenge** (Small) – “[Underwater](#)” begins with an uplifting theme featuring brass that quickly turns menacing with orchestration in the lower registers, almost growling, with percussive overlays and an interweaving of the William’s “da-dum” theme from **Jaws** to forecast or accompany the presence of the shark and create suspense. Another reviewer describes “[Underwater](#)” as “a lovely pastoral motif for brass and orchestra...which is quickly absorbed by the malevolent shark theme as adventures turn dark. Small’s suspense music is full of percussive orchestral whisperings and malicious patterns.”

Sea Buddies

- **Zeus and Roxanne** (Rowland) - In “Shark Attack / Stranded Sub,” “percussion and strings [are used] to build tension when Mary Beth finds herself in a flooding submarine during one of the more suspenseful portions of the film.”

Sea Subs (Fantasy Subs)

- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea (TV – Second Season)** (Goldsmith) – Goldsmith’s use of the low register woodwinds conveys a “deep water” feeling.
- **Fantastic Voyage** (Rosenman) – As heard in “[The Chart](#),” when the Proteus is thrown off-course and forced to travel through Benes’ heart, “Rosenman introduces a rustling, thunderous effect of grinding double basses to underscore the threat and power of the heart.” When the crew leaves the Proteus to attach a snorkel to the capillary wall adjoining Benes’ lung alveoli, as heard in “[Group Leaves](#),” brief “repeated xylophone notes, flute trills, harp ostinatos and high-pitched string tones evoke the fluids in which the crew finds themselves swimming, with a crescendo as Grant approaches the lung.” When dozens of antibodies swarm toward Cora (Raquel Welch), as heard in “[Cora Trapped](#),” a “stuttering brass figure and a shrieking, impressionistic piccolo flourish announce the danger before Rosenman

reprises his antibody music, this time with much more ferocity as the entities pursue Cora and Grant. A plaintive rendition of the primary melody sounds as they near the safety of the ship, but the angry antibody music redoubles as the objects reach Cora and enshroud her body.” Once Cora has been pulled inside the sub, “Rosenman employs buzzing, stuttering brass alarms to underscore the sequence of the men tearing the antibodies off of Cora’s body, while a touch of chimes underscores the crystallizing effect of the antibodies exposed to air.”

Sea Subs (War Subs)

- **Das Boot (The Boat)** (Doldinger) – When the sub has been forced to the seabed, the cue “Waiting” uses atonal bassoons to represent the creaking hull as the crew wait terrified and motionless for the pressure seals to breach and the cold water to come racing in. The hull holds out, and this is accompanied by the cue “Locked In” which utilizes uneven percussion and synthetic slide whistles over a sustained electronic tone as the crew realize that quick death has merely been replaced by the slow agony of asphyxiation.
- **Crimson Tide** (Zimmer) – One reviewer commented that the film’s claustrophobic setting aboard a submarine that may be headed straight into war is “effectively suggested in a quiet, brooding mixture of electronics and sparse orchestra, contrasting with those fantastic moments where the composer is allowed to let rip...and the brass and percussion take over entirely. Zimmer’s themes are suitably dark (minor keys only)... [and] all of Zimmer’s trademarks are represented, including heavy bass and percussion as well as the familiar and effective use of strings as both the rhythmic and harmonic core of the music.”
- **U-571** (Marvin) – The “[Going to 200 Meters](#)” cue is “edgy, quickly becoming unsettling and tense, with dry, high pitched strings giving an icy, bleak and near hopeless air.” Another reviewer described this track as “shatteringly tense..., sounding in perfect unison with the groaning steel hull that creates the submarine’s pressure-cooker atmosphere.”

Sea Treasures

- **Beneath the 12-Mile Reef** (Herrmann) – Herrmann’s score for this film was the first score recorded in left-center-right stereo for film presentation. Underwater musical sequences were close-miked (three harps per channel), while surface musical sequences were recorded with the mics placed at a greater distance from the orchestra, giving more of a light or airy feel to the score. Below the surface, you can feel the water pressure—closely miked organ pedals and low brass along with some incredible harp work. The surface musical sequences border on almost a sort of monophonic stereo sound with the stereo separation reduced, whereas the underwater sequences yield remarkable stereo separation.
- **The Wreck of the Mary Deare** (Duning) – “[Villian Higgins/Patch Vindicated/Trapped Divers](#)” accompanies Sands and Patch as they “scuba dive into the Mary Deare to investigate the cargo hold...but they are spotted by Higgins, now working the ship’s salvage, who seals the divers inside the hold. Duning walks the narrow line between enhancing the moods and tension of the underwater movement without going beyond the (necessarily claustrophobic) confines of the action itself.”
- **Raise the Titanic** (Barry) – Barry’s “eerie, low-key strains aptly evoke the metaphorical murkiness of

the politicians behind the scheme, and then later the more literal murkiness of the Atlantic. Most of his music in [the film] is quite dark and disturbing, albeit still very melodic.” As a reviewer noted, much of the score of **Raise the Titanic** is “very, very similar; all underwater music, mostly rather slow, with only a few variations around the same theme.” “[Main Title / The Mine Shaft](#)” - “There...sea-deep and shrouded in murk long rests the barnacle-encrusted hulk which was the Titanic. . . . Deep, resonant musical timbres allude to the turbid depths of the ocean and the final unholy resting place of the Titanic.” “[Deep Quest / The Flood!](#)” - “The submersible ‘Deep Quest’ commences the...undersea search for the remains of the Titanic. A second submersible, ‘Starfish’, delving too deep inherits pressure of more than six thousand pounds per square inch, blows its seals, is instantly flooded with seawater...and implodes, killing its crew members. ‘Deep Quest’ surveying the ocean floor is occasion for John Barry’s august requiem music and an allied motif, a ‘search’ theme accompanies ‘Starfish’ until matters become fraught, then tragic, the music becoming alternatively ponderous and edgy.”

Sea Escapes

- **Beyond the Poseidon Adventures** (Fielding) – While much of the score is comprised of specific themes associated with the film’s protagonists, their quest for wealth aboard the Poseidon, and the conflict among protagonists in the action scenes, Field used “strings, woodwinds (in fluttering, sinuous gestures) and muted brass [to] create an uneasy, claustrophobic atmosphere, suggesting the surging ocean outside (around three minutes into ‘[They Go Aboard](#),’ in ‘Move It Out Sarge,’ ‘Sprague Pumps’ and late in ‘[Conversations While Waiting](#)’).”
- **Pressure** (Wallfisch) – The first half of “Ocean Emergency,” noted one reviewer, highlights the composer’s method of “creating claustrophobic ambience within the diving bell while the second half of the track conjures images of the endless ocean that swallowed the ship and is about to consume our heroes as well.”



HORIZONTAL MOVEMENT – This entails the use of rhythmic or repetitive sequences of notes to convey (accompany) the movement of a person, aquatic creature, or object (e.g., boat or submarine) forward through or under the water.

Sea Monsters

- **Gorgo** (Lavagnino) – “Gorgo Sighted” is heard as the protagonists scuba dive in the ocean and catch their first glimpse of Gorgo, accompanied by furtive woodwinds and a smattering of trumpets and trombones.
- **The Monster That Challenged the World** (Roemheld) – The cue “The Monster” “keeps the tension high and helps conceal the fact that although the enormous creature moves realistically from the ‘neck’ upward, it is totally incapable of traveling laterally. Roemheld’s action music coalesces with close-ups of the monster to create the impression that the beast has somehow perambulated toward the divers.”
- **Attack of the Crab Monsters** (Stein) – In “Beach Talk” a solo violin melody brings us out of the

water and onto the beach.

Sea Mutants

- **Creature from the Black Lagoon** (Stein) – “Kay and the Monster” (Parts 1 and 2), as one reviewer noted, is considered a centerpiece of this score “both because of the magnificent sequence where Kay unknowingly partakes in a water ballet with the Creature, and also because of the dramatic impetus the music gives those mostly dialogue-free scenes.” Kay’s pleasant swim through the water is accompanied by “Kay and the Monster, Part 1” which is orchestrated for flutes, clarinets, swirling harp, orchestra bells, and vibraphone that distract the viewer from the terror lurking beneath the surface. The diversion is interrupted when the Gill-Man is seen from behind, with the Creature theme sounding on French horns. “As the Gill-Man swims after the oblivious Kay, the ‘Creature Advancing’ theme sounds on groaning clarinets, bass clarinets, bassoon, organ, and string bass. Then, understated trumpet versions of the Creature theme offer punctuation. . . , while gong adds threatening overtones. When the Gill-Man moves closer beneath Kay in a sexually-suggestive underwater mating dance, full orchestra builds tension.”
- **War Gods of the Deep** (Black) – In “Final Escape / End Titles” “Ben, Jill, Harold and Herbert get into ancient diving gear for a final escape, but their road to freedom is blocked by even more gillmen. The perilous action music occasionally slows down to represent the underwater setting until our heroes land on the seashore.”

Sea Battles

- **Jaws** (Williams) – “Music is often the unseen shark. . . . [Hence] the mindless ostinato figure at the bottom of the orchestra that keeps coming relentlessly at you.” The brilliant stroke of Williams’ score is the simple motif for the shark. Unaffected by the musical tides, it unrelentingly cuts through all with its chilling monotony. The insistent (but not feverish) rasp of throaty strings is rivetingly appropriate as the beast moves coldly on its targets. This icy sound also has the nastiness of grinding, saw- like teeth about it that makes it doubly great.”
- **Orca** (Morricone) – When the whale attacks the fishing village and the fisherman’s shack, the action is accompanied by the cue “[The Fight, The Victory, The Death](#)” which features “low droning strings and. . . quick sputtering, growling brass chords underneath chilling, high-pitch strings which spiral higher and higher to a crescendo. This piece also, upon occasion, utilizes a number of bizarre and indescribable percussion effects, as well as rapidly-plucked strings.” Another version (“[Attack and Mistake](#)”) is heard near the film’s end that features a final battle between the whale and the fisherman.
- **Piranha II: The Spawning** (Cipriani) – One reviewer commented that Cipriani’s score for this film demonstrated that he was “remarkably adept at suggesting approaching horrors, as in ‘Prelude’, where a quietly menacing opening progresses through a harp interlude and gradually increases in orchestral volume, reaching a crashing climax with thundering drums.”

Sea Buddies

- **The Day of the Dolphin** (Delerue) – With the accompanying cue “The Chase,” “Terrell desperately

orders Alpha to stop Bee, and Delerue shows off his novel approach to action, treating the dolphin's race against time in a thrilling Baroque fashion that prefigures John Williams' chase music in *Jaws*. Vivaldi-esque strings mix with Delerue's sonar motif as Alpha swims back to the Foundation yacht, only to discover that Beta has already left on her mission. Delerue stops and starts this classical pursuit, accentuating the suspense, modulating with sustains, sonar and an emotional clarinet, the music steadily growing with orchestral intensity until Alpha finally reunites with Bee. The sonar motif takes over as the dolphins communicate, Delerue's *concerto grosso* turns triumphant with the inclusion of Baroque trumpets. The trumpeting brass races with Alpha and Beta as they head back to give the Foundation their just deserts. Then with a string sustain, Delerue slyly takes his music out just before the conspirators hear the sound of the mind being planted on their yacht."

- **Loch Ness** (Jones) – In "False Alarm." "Adrian [John's local assistant] spots something strange on the radar and gets all worked up. John smells a false alarm coming a mile away.... For this first section, Jones uses the monster theme to suggest an ominous presence in the water." The lengthy cue "Double Collision Course" "underscores both John and Laura's romantic collision and John's collision (at long last) with Eaech Uisage [Nessie]. ... The music returns to the monster theme as the computers indicate something very big, which is moving very quickly to the boat. The rhythm builds and as Beastie and the boat collide, the full power of the orchestra is unleashed. This intricate climax is both aggressive and atonal, and snippets of the monster theme are everywhere. The full theme is heard as we see a giant creature swimming in the water. John is knocked unconscious and thrown into the water, but is saved by the creature."
- **Lady in the Water** (Howard) – One reviewer commented that there have been "a handful of scores throughout the years that have perfectly captured the perpetual movement of water, and **Lady in the Water** joins that elite group. Whether on piano, celesta, harp, or string, there is a constant tingling of motion in the score. Even at his most soothing and reflective, Howard maintains a bed of rhythmic activity that intensifies when necessary for the 'awe factor' of the specific scene."

Sea Subs (Fantasy Subs)

- **20,000 Leagues under the Sea** (Smith) – During the film's prologue, as one reviewer noted, the score provides "tranquil music for a shot of a ship at sea, and then a brief but vivid musical depiction of the Nautilus and its first attack, the latter musically represented by a passage of descending tremolo strings leading to massed brass which crescendo back upward to depict the collision and explosion."
- **Captain Nemo and the Underwater City** (Morley) – As a gigantic mutant stingray called the Mobula approaches Templemer, chasing a group of Nemo's divers toward the city's main gate, the divers shoot harpoons at the creature. The action is effectively underscored by "[Mobula Attack](#)" that "creates panic with a stabbing brass figure that cuts through swirling textures. The processional theme offers relief once the gate is closed and the divers are safely within the city." Another reviewer provided the following analysis of the cue "Mobula" – "Chromatic lines struggle to climb once the Mobula's tail becomes ensnared in one of the submarine's propellers. After the Nautilus breaks free... suspenseful tremolo strings sound for the damaged Nautilus lying stationary on the ocean floor. Nemo resolves to ram the Mobula, with brass rising over lumbering accompaniment as a metallic spear emerges from the ship's bow. Morley mounts a heroic rendition of the processional theme as the

Nautilus and the Mobula race toward one another; a final interjection from the beat's stabbing rhythm culminates in a dissonant exclamation when the Nautilus skewers the Mobula, killing it. The creature sinks to murky, unraveling accompaniment, the processional theme offering relief as Nemo sets a course for home."

- **20,000 Leagues under the Sea** (Scott) – The film's composer, John Scott, commented that the score's main theme (e.g., heard in "End Credits") is followed by "a number of repeated percussive chords which are meant to suggest that somewhere under the surface of the ocean lurks the mighty Nautilus. I wanted my score to end with these percussive chords fading away to nothing—giving a feeling that the Nautilus has just gone out of range but is still wandering the 'underwater,' like the flying Dutchman, unredeemed and destined to wander."
- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** (Sawtell and Shefter) – One of the composers' contribution to the Seaview special effects sequences is a slow, powerful, ascending horn fanfare that accompanies the sub racing along its underwater course toward the equator and during the scenes of the ship preparing to surface.
- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea (TV – Second Season)** (Goldsmith) – A quietly relentless playing of the Seaview motif plays against riotous brass attacks, particularly in a sequence in which the whale rams the sub ("Collision Course I & II"). This cue prominently features ripping brass waltz figures which became almost a signature piece for the "Seaview rock and roll" sequences of crew members falling from side to side of the sub's bridge as the camera was rocked back and forth. One reviewer's favorite cue plays as the sub chases the whale that has swallowed the diving bell, with Goldsmith alternating the brass exclamations for the shots of the whale with the low-woodwind-with-subtle-percussion for the intercut shots of the crew of the sub in pursuit is incredibly tension-building and just masterful. The score builds suspense through the repeating Seaview motif as the sub's diving bell is coaxed loose from the whale, which has swallowed it. Here Goldsmith interpolated a reverbed pulse of woodwinds and keyboard here in a way that almost suggests a colossal burp bubbling up from the whale. The final playing of a heroic variation of the Seaview theme against a descending brass line was a standard sign-off for the show, usually playing over a miniature shot of the submarine.
- **Fantastic Voyage** (Rosenman) – In one version of this score's primary theme, "a low, coiling effect from cellos and violas emerges as a current begins to drag the sub off course. A violent rhythm from low brass is introduced as the ship shakes, and the cue becomes extremely agitated, with heavy brass trills as the sub enters a whirlpool and is pulled through the wall of the artery into a vein." "Mysterious tones escort the sub closer to the entrance to the heart.... [When the heart has been stopped], the composer employs a brass tone pyramid...to underscore the Proteus' engines building as it races toward the valve ahead. An agitated brass figure erupts and crescendos as the sub reaches the heart valve, only to cascade downward in a clatter of piano and harp notes as the immense chamber of the heart is finally entered. Rosenman balances slowly building tones with the rumbling of the double brass to build tension as the sub slowly navigates the interior of the heart, reaching a final crescendo as the sub bullets through the pulmonary valve just before Benes' heart is restarted."

"[Get the Laser](#)" accompanies the saboteur who hijacks the sub and maneuvers it onto a collision course with the clotted nerve ending. "A rapid-fire brass tone pyramid erupts again as the sub's

turbines engage. Heavy orchestral rhythms and an explosion of brass are heard as the sub rockets toward the nerve—until Grant [who already had left the sub to operate on the blood clot with the laser] commandeers the laser and tears open the sub’s hull with a blast from the weapon, resulting in a riot of horn glissandos as the sub crashes into a nest of dendrites. The score dips into subdued suspense as Grant boards the ship and helps the pilot, but menacing low string textures emerge as immense white corpuscles gather to attack the ship. Unable to free the trapped, panicking Michaels, Grant watches in horror as the traitor is engulfed by a white corpuscle as it eats away at the Proteus—heavy brass, coiling strings and a brisk tone pyramid accompany the death of Michaels. Another heavy low brass chord presages a terrifying wall of the primary theme from tense, high-pitched strings—in effect the death scream of the Proteus as it’s dissolved by white corpuscles.”

“[Pulmonary Artery](#)” – The primary motif is again heard as the Proteus travels through a pulmonary artery. “A menacing brass chord sounds as the ship suddenly begins to lose air pressure.... After deciding to siphon air from Benes’ lungs, the crews begins to suit up and leave the ship, but an alarming brass chord announces the discovery of another problem: damage to the surgical laser which is essential for the operation on Benes.the primary theme returns as the Proteus ‘lands’ at the bottom of the capillary it has entered.”

“[Proteus Moving through the Sac](#)” – “After a subtly foreboding opening with several variations of the primary theme, the score introduces rustling, agitated effects for the jungle of fibers [impeding the sub’s progress], with high-range strings gradually voicing alarm. Here Rosenman features bubbling woodwinds, rustling low strings and wild, swirling high string glissandos for the small, voracious antibodies which are attacking viruses and germs outside the ship.”

- **InnerSpace** (Goldsmith) – Another “underwater” or, more accurately stated, “in the bloodstream” cue is “[Gut Reaction](#)” which one reviewer described as the score’s “highlight...without a doubt.” As Tuck tries to successfully maneuver his craft through the heart, violin flourishes to help propel the craft.”

Sea Subs (War Subs)

- **Destination Tokyo** (Waxman) – Commenting on his score for this film, Franz Waxman stated: “The sounds of guns...can become very monotonous unless they are given variety and climax by music . . . There is an underwater shot with three torpedoes heading for a Japanese battleship. This scene was scored by striking a cymbal and then reversing the sound track so that the volume increases instead of decreasing. When the sound track ran against its own frequencies, the effect was forceful and frightening. The Radar device sound to that same picture was done by a combination of instruments with the high frequencies eliminated and not played at a steady but at a variable speed.”
- **The Enemy Below** (Harline) – “Target Waiting” provides “chilling suspense for the stealthy hunt, with extremely low pizzicato strings evoking the enemy below: the kill U-boat biding its time, waiting to strike.”
- **Das Boot (The Boat)** (Doldinger) – While the fourth track of the film’s soundtrack CD presents the seven note cello motif of the film’s score in a complete form as also later used for the end title. “This time a strong rhythmic pounding and synthetic droning represent the monotonous and ever present diesels which drive the sub onwards, and ASDIC pings echo out at regular intervals to add colour to

the piece, a sound sampled by Doldinger and altered until its pitch and reverb was suited to the tempo.”

- **The Hunt for Red October** (Poledouris) – The cue “[Course Two-Five Zero](#)” “is used many times during the course of the film to reinforce the underwater images of the gigantic sub, changing course or churning into the distance.” The cue “[Red Route 1](#)” “provides more traveling music, complete with rousing choral elements for the huge submerged titan. The ship is lent an air of grace and apparent speed by the use of delicate synths, the tension in the string work and the necessary vocal calls.”
- **Crimson Tide** (Zimmer) – The cue “[Mutiny](#),” as a reviewer observed, “virtually bristles with forward motion, propelled by the dynamic rhythm and melody of the music.”

Sea Spies

- **Never Say Never Again** (Legrand) – “Loud, dissonant yet jazzy music is provided for the underwater scene as Largo and his men move the bomb through the cave [[The Underwater Cave](#)]: it’s an awkwardly noisy, fast-temp cue, which seems out of sync with the slow, lethargic progress of the actors.”
- **A View to a Kill** (Barry) – The inflation and launch of Zorin’s airship—intercut with Bond and May Day swimming through the mine—gets a dramatic, powerful orchestral musical treatment in the cue “Airship to Silicon Valley.”

Sea Treasures

- **The Wreck of the Mary Deare** (Duning) – As the cue “[Bulls’-Eye](#)” plays, “Higgins waits for the divers above their one escape route from the ship’s innards and spears Sands when the two attempt to swim past. Underwater gloom leads to an action outburst for the violence.”
- **Raise the Titanic** (Barry) – This score’s “dramatic music doesn’t really kick in until...the very slow and melodramatic search theme occupies sole possession of the score [as heard in “[Finding the Cornet / Spy on Board / The Smoke Stack](#)”]; the falling strings offer a great ‘sinking feeling’ while the mini-submersibles are crawling along the depths of the ocean.” “‘Deep Quest’ amends its search pattern—soon discovering...the very cornet played by...a member of the Titanic’s band. . . . Soon [‘Deep Quest’], scanning the sea bed with sensitive sonar, pinpoints a major discovery—one of the Titanic’s towering smokestack’s...proof the vessel itself must be nearby. The Search theme announces the discovery of the cornet, and later the requiem music accompanies the finding of the smokestack, but sinister scoring intervenes to accentuate that the mission may be subject to espionage.”

Sea Escapes

- **The Poseidon Adventure** (Williams) – As the aging *S.S. Poseidon* muscles its way through heavy waves, Williams’ score begins with “a throbbing, surging motif voiced by double basses and low brass. An 8-note fanfare erupts in a powerful statement for horns and is repeated with a slight variation before giving way to the primary melody, another permutation of the fanfare carried over a six-note rhythmic motif for harp, brass and strings, with swirling string glissandos and sustains. The throbbing

motif continues, doubling as both an accompaniment to the onscreen storm and as a suggestion of the force of will that will allow most of the film's primary characters to survive."

- **Leviathan** (Goldsmith) - "[Too Hot](#)," "[The Body Within](#)," and "[Can We Fix It](#)" "introduce wild thrashing synth effects backed up by big orchestral brass as the creature lets loose" during the chase sequences.
- **DeepStar Six** (Manfredini) – Three CD tracks from this score provide examples of scoring horizontal movement: "Seatrack Attack" - "the monster theme hits hard and drives us forward. ...This [track] combines both scored and aleatoric elements that create energy and power. ... When the monster attacks the Seatrack, heroic triad structures accompany Collins and Burciaga as they react. As the monster continues his barrage, the brass section reaches their highest range." "Swim to the Mini-Sub" accompanies McBride as he "swims across the station to secure the mini-sub." In "The Rescue," the cue's "second section relates to the monster attack of Laidlaw and McBride as they approach in the sub. Because they turn off the lights, the monster stops his assault. The tension in the high strings is slowly resolved as the monster loses interest in the attack."
- **Deep Rising** (Goldsmith) – Goldsmith faced both sound-mix and editorial challenges in tackling the film's climatic action. "[E Ride](#)" plays as Finnegan and Trillian board a jet ski and race through the flooded corridors of the ocean liner with the monster in pursuit as Goldsmith adds "a cascading trumpet glissando to the frenetic action material to cut through the heavy sound mix."
- **Deep Blue Sea** (Rabin) – "Anarchy" starts "with a blaring shark attack in synth brass and percussion, then segues into an excellent melodic theme with violins, horns, and sharp percussion strikes, glissading downward and upward in intensity several times before an appearance by the chorus, which ends the song amidst a [cacophony] of synth instrument flourishes. The track is one of the best on the album, and one that can best be characterized as a chase theme."
- **Poseidon** (Badelt) – A reviewer commented that Badelt had delivered "a superior, lively action score", with the brass and strings creating "a fantastic portrait of the huge ship cruising along in the opening sequence."



VERTICAL MOVEMENT – This entails the composer of a film's score selecting notes from the musical scale, such as, for example, using a series of ascending notes when there is movement of a protagonist (person, aquatic creature or object) rising to the surface, or notes descending when a protagonist is going down toward the depths of a body of water.

Sea Monsters

- **Gorgo** (Lavagnino) – "Gorgo Surfaces" is heard as Gorgo pops his head out of the water and is scored with crescendoing tremolo strings and organ.
- **The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms** (Buttolph) – "[Diving Bell](#)," heard as the diving bell descends into the Hudson Submarine Canyons, keeps the music subdued by using minimal brass and muted

trombones along with a steady rhythm from cello, piano, and harp to accent the slow journey to the depths.

- **The Monster That Challenged the World** (Roemheld) – “Fight” accompanies “the battle between the mollusk and the men on the boat. The high-energy composition makes constant use of the monster theme, and the descending runs heard in the ‘Main Title’ are used throughout the piece, including when the injured creature sinks back into the sea.” “Terror” “reigns when Sandy discovers that...a hungry, full growth mollusk is after the girl and her mother [in the laboratory]. . . . A memorable musical touch occurs when Roemheld uses high tremolo strings...to convey Sandy’s failed attempt to reach a high window, while...Gail prepares her daughter for what appears to be their imminent death. Roemheld’s monster theme predominates during this cue.”
- **War Gods of the Deep** (Black) – “Kidnapped Jill / Secret Watergate” provides underscore as Ben and two others follow “the secret passageway of the gillman, finding] a secret whirlpool that takes them down to [an] underwater system of caverns where the rest of the film transpires.” The highlight of Black’s score is this epic, ten-minute long escape sequence [“Underwater Escape”] that plays almost without any dialogue.... Shot in murky waters...., the ensuing chase sequence and gillman fistfights looks like a 19th century version of *Thunderball* with a guest appearance from The Creature.”

Sea Mutants

- **Creature from the Black Lagoon** (Stein) - When the film shifts from a land-based scene to an underwater scene, “lyrical music featuring woodwinds, harp, celeste, vibraphone, and strings descends with the camera.... A shot of underwater life is accompanied by beautiful clarinets, vibraphone, harp, celeste, and violins.”
- **Island of the Fishmen** (Michelini) - The real “aqua cue” (“[Atlantide](#)” or “Descent To Atlantis”) in this film’s score is heard as the protagonists descend in a diving bell to observe the fishmen swimming to the ocean’s bottom to retrieve treasure from the sunken city of Atlantis. Luc Van de Ven described this cue as “suitably dreamy.”

Sea Battles

- **Moby Dick** (Sainton) - In “[Eerie Calm/He Rises](#),” during which Moby Dick violently reappears from the depths, with the orchestra erupting as the enraged whale brings chaos down upon Ahab’s crew, “snare drums thrillingly suggesting the mad passion of the whalers as they engage a beast they can never hope to subdue, a fact driven home by the very plunging chords that introduced Elijah’s prophecy early in the film. . . . The only pause...comes as Ahab, now dead and lashed forever to Moby Dick, yet beckons his whalers on, eliciting from Sainton a magnificent dirge in which the bass leads the rest of the orchestra to divide, reaching defiantly to the heights and plunging to the depths at the very same time. . . . Thundering rage in the orchestra then returns...as Moby Dick not only brings about the seeming demise of the entire crew but rams the ship and creates a huge maelstrom that causes the Pequod to vanish beneath the waves, a nightmarish piece of musical wizardry that, at its most exciting, finds the orchestra caught up in a repeated four-note figure rooted in the hammering motif of Ahab. As the ship disappears, Moby Dick’s presence soars high above the waves, this time in

more melancholy guise. The...plunging chords from Elijah's dock-side prophecy eventually finish off the ship in heavily deliberate fashion."

- **Jaws 2** (William) – "[The Water Kite Sequence](#)" serves as underscore as the shark makes several passes at a man riding a recreational water kite, alternately ascending and descending over the ocean, with the kite making contact with the water several times. "Nervous, jagged rhythms help propel the shark in its deadly path." Williams builds up "the suspense...by almost religiously stressing an upward movement, as the water kite 'bait' suddenly ascends out of the water."
- **Jaws 3-D** (Parker) – One scoring technique used by Parker to accompany and heighten the suspense associated with the film's underwater scenes was to have certain orchestral parts played in the lower registers, while other parts are played in the upper registers, with the lower register parts moving up the musical scale as the higher register parts move down the scale. The effect on the listener is a sense not only of being underwater but also that a shark may be circling and closing in. This effect is first heard in the cue titled "[Underwater Kingdom and Shark Chase](#)." In "[Overman's Last Dive](#)," Parker orchestrates this cue with a series of descending notes played by different parts of the orchestra to accompany the diver's descent, with additional orchestration conveying an ever-approaching danger.

Sea Buddies

- **The Day of the Dolphin** (Delerue) – When the gate separating the two dolphins is raised, the cue "Fa and Bee Reunited" "exuberantly unleashes Baroque strings and the clarinet, his Vivaldi-esque music leaping about as joyously as Alpha and Beta."
- **Loch Ness** (Jones) – In "The Cave of Wonders" "the water starts boiling and something very big appears behind [John's] back. The monster theme is now in full swing, although the strings make it sound much less threatening than before. John turns around and stares in awe at the monster that has just popped out of the water. When it cries out with its shrill, high-pitched voice, the full orchestra burst forth with a triumphant statement of the main theme. John is thrown into rapture as he watches Mrs. Saurus surface. John pulls out his camera and starts making pictures of the Beasties. The creatures are startled and start diving again."

Sea Subs (Fantasy Subs)

- **20,000 Leagues under the Sea** (Smith) – A prominent film composer (John Debney) commented: "...and up from the depths a light is seen. Not just any light though. It is a light of malice and foreboding. The appearance of the Nautilus is represented by the downward plunge of the low brass and woodwinds and darkly descending strings. And we know at this moment all is not well underneath the crest of the imposing waves."
- **Mysterious Island** (Herrmann) – In the cue "[Captain Nemo/The Grotto](#)," the Nautilus rises from beneath the waves ominously accompanied in the "Captain Nemo" portion of the cue by a "startling three-note phrase." "The Grotto" underscores the discovery of a cavern leading to a watery grotto housing the Nautilus, this discovery emphasized by the dense misterioso nature of the accompanying music. Later, in "[Escape from the Island](#)," as lava of the erupting volcano edges ever closer, the Nautilus's pumps are activated and the repaired ship rises from the deep to the surface, "the music

graphically conveying the massive rush of air, the mighty displacement of water and the creaking bulk of the wreck as it ascends through the fathoms.”

- **Captain Nemo and the Underwater City** (Morley) – When Nemo, Joab, and Mala offer to take the guests on a tour of Templemer’s underwater fish farm., they don wet suits and scuba gear and board an elevator, accompanied by “To Sea” scored with “a mixture of a rising tone pyramid and the processional theme; a pure descending line unravels as they are transported down into the water. The main theme receives a flowing, octatonic treatment as Nemo escorts the group toward the sea doors.”
- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** (Sawtell and Shefter) – Sawtell and Shefter utilized the ballad’s opening neighbor-note motif as their main theme. “Its romantic and optimistic sweep represents the Seaview submarine and the film as a whole. In early sequences of the sub diving and surfacing, silky arrangements of the motive for strings and flute accompany the vessel, changing keys and effectively creating the idea of immersion through modulation. . . . For the orchestrations. . . , the composers pay homage to musical traditions for the sea with harp and arpeggiated strings.” The score provides at least two examples of vertical movement-related scoring:

“[Dive](#)” – Beautiful underwater textures for harp and woodwinds and a key-changing variation. . . of the title song’s main opening phrases accompany the Seaview’s descent under the polar ice. The orchestration for lush strings over arpeggios for harps, low strings and woodwinds has since become a standard for scoring vessels in space as well as at sea.”

“[Ice Block Collision](#)” – “Frenetic music for brass, xylophone and percussion gives way to a crushing panoply for full orchestra as the Seaview is buffeted by melting blocks of ice (incongruously shown floating down). The surging ‘ascent’ motif for horns accompanies the submarine to the surface. . . . The ‘ascension’ theme introduced in this track is a straightforward statement of the octatonic scale, a hybrid scale featured heavily in Igor Stravinsky’s groundbreaking works of the early 20th century like ‘The Rite of Spring.’ Whereas traditional seven-note major and minor scales are asymmetrical combinations of whole- and half-steps—thus forming the basis for conventional tonality—the eight-note octatonic scale is a symmetrical pattern which alternates whole and half steps.”

- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea (TV)** (Sawtell) – One reviewer noted that while Sawtell wrote a very different melody for the TV series theme, he used the same “immersion through modulation” approach “to give the feeling of a vessel sinking into underwater depths.”

Sea Subs (War Subs)

- **Das Boot (The Boat)** (Doldinger) – Repairs are made and the captain gambles the remaining air supply on attempting to refloat the boat. “Rescue” concludes “the nightmare as the gamble pays off and rising strings follow the boat to the surface and a crescendo of the seven note motif is [is heard] as the surface is reached and the crew gather round the hatches and gulp down lungfuls of fresh air.”
- **Ice Station Zebra** (Legrand) – “[Voyage Starts](#)” presents the “water theme” as the Tigerfish dives, and is again heard at various points as the story unfolds—e.g., in the cue “The Mysterious Rendezvous” as the sub surfaces. When the Tigerfish reaches the edge of the Arctic ice shelf and dives underneath, the water theme accompanies in “[Opaque Water](#).” As the film nears its “intermission” during its roadshow

presentation, the sub tries unsuccessfully to rise to the surface through an area of thin ice, accompanied by a rising orchestra (“[Bring Her Up](#)”). The sub tries two more times to break through the ice, with Legrand’s “ascension” material (“[Tigerfish Hits Ice](#)”) accompanying each attempt.

- **K 19: The Widomaker** (Badelt) – The cue “[Rapid Ascent](#),” arranged as a driving rhythm with quickening pace and ascending volume, effectively conveys the urgency of a submarine that needs to reach the surface as quickly as possible.
- **U-571** (Marvin) – “[S-33 Sinks](#)” begins with “a cold descending scale with accusing, woodwind: the strings here are, again, twitchy and apprehensive. There is not much warmth or light in this underwater battleground and this track serves to remind the listener of both the location and its dangers; some cold, claustrophobic watery effects appear and the cue closes.”
- **72 Meters** (Morricone) – The score’s second movement (“The Diving in the Sea”) “introduces intense chopping motif for basses, dramatic descending lines for cor anglais, muted trumpet. Aggressive piano, staccato brass add to fray.” “It starts with a rather disturbing sounding oboe generated and the music is reproducing the diving, tapping, radar, problems, etc. of the ‘Kursk.’ As the track/movement evolves it ends with a slow string passage showing the desperation, despair, and finally all hope is lost.”

Sea Spies

- **For Your Eyes Only** (Conti) – The cue “[Submarine](#)” provides underscore as “Bond and Melina descend to the underwater grave of the British spy trawler, a triangle rhythm and brushed metal chimes create a dreamy, submerged feeling before rhythm section, strings and synthesizers bleat out a distorted version of the James Bond theme. This marks a turning point in the score as it begins to hearken more toward the traditional 007 sound, with wah-wah bass and some dramatic brass playing for the discovery of the underwater wreck.” As Bond and Melina take a two-man submarine down, Conti brings the “Bond Theme” back in a synth-driven version...; it becomes more dramatic as they sight the sunken St. George’s ship and settle on the ocean floor. On the LP, this cue is titled “Submarine.” Their search for the ATAC machine, the fight with one of Kristatos’ men who also wants it, and the underwater battle of submarines are all scored with dark, suspenseful and often intense orchestral combinations, including the pairing of high strings and very low piano.

Sea Treasures

- **Mara Maru** (Steiner) – After Mason drops anchor at the prospective site for recovering the diamonds from a sunken ship, his dive is accompanied by descending notes and chords with the horns prominently featured; when he is pulled up by his crewmates, his ascent is accompanied by ascending notes.
- **Beneath the 12-Mile Reef** (Herrmann) – As Mike dives underwater, “the score [“The Quiet Sea/The Airline”] intercuts the atmosphere of the mysterious undersea environments with nervous strings for the activities above. Later, at the reef, “Tony is rigged for a dive. Once he hits the water, overlapping harp arpeggios underscore his descent [“[Descending](#)/The Sea Garden”]. The undersea music is reprised in full as Tony’s expedition unfolds.”

- **The Wreck of the Mary Deare** (Duning) – In the film’s final underwater cue, “[Higgins Has It](#),” “Patch rigs the divers’ lamps in such a way as to deceive Higgins on their next attempt to escape. The score (and film) come to an action climax as Patch drags Higgins underwater to defeat him.”
- **The Deep** (Barry) – “First Discovery (Main Title)” conveys “the gentle water-drop plinking of piano backed by strings, swelling into long, undulating string-and-woodwind passages, alternatively sweetly melodic and ominously discordant, that will reappear throughout. Somehow, Barry gives us an aural equivalent of the new descending, now rising movement of deep-water dives. . . . Barry...captures the...upward stream of silvery air bubbles; the downward drift of the shafts of light; the languid, liquid of bodies in water.”
- **Raise the Titanic** (Barry) – “[The Titanic Uncovered](#)” provides underscore as “‘Deep Quest’, venturing dangerously into a yawning undersea chasm, finally chances on the stricken Titanic—the submersible’s...searchlights...revealing the decaying intricacy and encrusted...liner. ...the requiem music mingles with echoes of the Titanic theme as the wreck of the liner is finally located.”
- **CaboBlanco** (Goldsmith) – “The Diving Bell” cue (to hear a one-minute sample click track 2 arrow at [Musilla.net](#)) plays as a diving bell is lowered from a salvage ship to search the floor of the bay. As the ship’s commander monitors the crewman inside the bell, sinister brass signal the arrival of several frogmen out of the murky depths. Dissonant string arpeggios evoke the crew’s terror as the frogmen plant an explosive charge against the diving bell, the bell exploding to the accompaniment of a cacophonous musical finale. As one reviewer noted, the cue “introduces an ominous underwater environment focusing on sinister brass, spotlighting Tuba along with swirling strings as frogmen appear from the murky depths and assault the descending Bell. As a charge is set by them Goldsmith builds the anxiety of those stuck inside with a terrifying cacophony of strings as the Bell explodes.”

Sea Escapes

- **Gray Lady Down** (Fielding) – The cue “The Collision” provides an “explosion of vibrant brass instrumentation [that] veritably shatters the sub’s hull as it drops perilously into the murky deep.”
- **Titanic** (Horner) – Several cues (“[Hard to Starboard](#),” “[Unable To Stay, Unwilling To Leave](#),” “[The Sinking](#),” and “[Death of Titanic](#)”) include music that Horner composed to accompany the sinking of the Titanic. This portion of the score is “mostly exciting, loud and well composed action music. . . . The crashing pianos...make a welcome appearance a few times. . . . The rumbling, growling piano figure also appears several times.... One small calm moment occurs in “Unable to Stay, Unwilling to Leave” where the love theme appears in a quite beautiful version as the two lovers must abandon their sinking vessel. Of course, it doesn't stay quiet for long and the pulsing action music with dissonant brass chords [returns] as well as the twanging Morse-code motif. Another impressive moment of this track is when a huge glissando moves up through the entire orchestra, as though something huge (the sea...) swallows up the ship...produces an incredible effect. The track ends with an almost Michael Nyman like piano figure which is unbelievably haunting.”
- **Leviathan** (Goldsmith) – The main title cue accompanies “the camera's decent to the murky depths and [the] under water lab. Goldsmith’s cue actually seems to ascend, and as we get nearer to the

bottom explodes in a triumphant but elegant trumpet fanfare.” “The tender use of harp convey[s] light falling from above to the sea below dulling into darkness as the surface recedes and the abyssal waters exert their hold.” In “[Escape Bubbles](#)” the score’s elegant main theme returns in “and “builds steadily as the survivors escape to the surface.”

- **The Abyss** (Silvestri) – “As the protagonists penetrate deeper into the undersea trench, a New Age-style electronic theme is used to express the overall mystery that builds throughout the film.”
- **DeepStar Six** (Manfredini) – The cue “The Saga of Osborne and Hodges” includes “a driving rhythmic cue as the entire sea floor collapses around them [Osborne and Hodges]. The [next] sections are based on the ocean theme...as we see the underwater caverns. The final section enters with the monster theme as it is about to attack.”
- **Sphere** (Goldenthal) – As the crew descends to the space ship, “[The Gift](#)” is a variation on the theme first stated in “[Pandora’s Fanfare](#)” but this time played by full orchestra—the “effect is quite graceful, and sets a beautiful, yet alien tone.”
- **Poseidon** (Badelt) – “Sharp percussion and brass punctuate the crashing and rolling as the huge rogue wave turns the Poseidon upside down.... Strings portray the panic-stricken passengers as they are flung into a dizzying abyss in the ballroom.”



ORCHESTRATION – This entails how the composer structures passages in a film’s score so that the combination of instruments employed and their arrangement (which musicians play which instruments and when) convey a sense of a body of water as a one of a film’s protagonists and/or as the setting in which the action taking place in a film unfolds. Orchestration, for example, can provide a sense of a swell (a crescendo of notes) so as to convey a sense of water (waves) undulating or waves crashing onto the rocks, water pushing against an object (e.g., a boat such as in a storm), or movement of the ocean’s current. Alternatively, a specific orchestration may simply provide a musical complement to the narrative taking place on the screen becoming louder for action sequences (i.e., chases, fights, explosions, etc.) and softer for quieter moments, underscoring dialogue and/or enhancing emotions.

Sea Monsters

- **Gorgo** (Lavagnino) – The cue “[Underwater](#)” is heard as one of the film’s protagonists dives to search for bounty in a sunken ship and is similar in orchestration to “Restless Sea,” featuring vibe, harp, and bass clarinet to provide ominous tones. Lavagnino “makes a very effective use of deep, groaning chords from the string and woodwind sections.” “Restless Sea” features impressionistic figures in the woodwinds, setting the tone for much of Gorgo’s maritime music and conjuring up the mystery of the ocean. “Tidal Wave” is heard as underground volcanic activity tears up the ocean floor and releases Gorgo from a vast sub-oceanic cavern; the cue is scored for brass fanfares, with harp and woodwind glissandi. For Mama Gorgo’s attack, the score turns to “obligatory brass action music...which features

large, crashing notes for bass drum and low, growling brass.”

- **The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms** (Buttolph) – The composer uses “a particularly dense orchestral sound” to underscore the dinosaur on the loose. Segueing from “[Diving Bell](#),” “Bell and Octopus” offers “impressionistic jazz figures...that add life to the dated stock-footage battle between the shark and octopus, with this cue ending as the beast is sighted amidst the subterranean caverns.
- **The Monster That Challenged the World** (Roemheld) – “Death by Fright” is “a short sting heard as the creature’s shadow ascends over Sanders’ terrified face, the monster theme signaling his imminent death.” “Slime” plays as “Twill somehow fails to notice what looks like a gallon of vanilla taffy on the boat and he manages to stick his hand in it. Ponticello tremolo strings...emphasize the mysterious substance.” In “Dynamite” low piano is “heard when a mollusk emerges from its shell as an explosive charge malfunctions. Underwater images of the monster and divers alternate with shots of the scientists on land, the music mirroring those changes. High strings help to build the excitement, with a climactic fortissimo accompanying the explosion.” In “Goodbye,” as “divers search for mollusk eggs, piano and other low orchestral sounds add a sense of foreboding.” “Kraken’s Death” accompanies the demise of the mollusk in the laboratory offering “more all-out monster music, with strong brass, piano, and woodwind runs.”
- **Attack of the Crab Monsters** (Stein) – Stein uses subtle violin figures throughout the score to develop an intimate sense of dread and unease, which also suggest the psychic powers of the overgrown crabs to solicit their victims (“Martha Hears the Voices,” “More Tremors,” and “Voices Call to Jules”—in the latter enhancing the violin with a solo woodwind played in similar austerity).

Sea Mutants

- **Creature from the Black Lagoon** (Stein) – At various points, Stein employs minor melodic passages to suggest the tranquility and solitude of the lost lagoon (emphasizing woodwinds and gradually anticipating trombones). These softer string and woodwind arrangements for the film’s quieter moments contrast with loud, brassy heart-beat/footstep motifs associated with the Creature.
- **Humanoids from the Deep** (Horner) – One reviewer noted how portions of this score convey a “threatening ambiance.” Cues like “Unwelcome Visitor” and “The Grotto” impart an exceedingly anxious air via intensely resonant and, on occasion, rather discordant orchestration, the suspense further magnified through screeching strings and obtrusive percussion on works such as “The Humanoids Attack” and “Final Confrontation.” “The Last Voyage” starts with a playful string-and-xylophone melody but soon becomes much more sinister, with lots of clanging bells, thumping drums and forbidding string figures, while “The Eavesdropper” and “The Search” both feature sombre, sinister strings. “[Jerry’s Death](#)” and “The Last of Linda”) rely, far too heavily noted the reviewer, on Herrmann-style shrieking strings and dissonant ear-shattering noise to unsettle the listener.
- **Island of the Fishmen** (Michelini) – “[Main Title](#)” “opens with a ‘screaming’ chord from brass and strings over throbbing drums before moving into a rushing, frantic theme for horns.” This theme is also heard in other cues such as “[I Mostri](#),” “Inside Out,” “The Screamers Return,” and “Various Troubles” as an “[Ennio] Morricone-esque action piece with slicing string chords over a driving

keyboard and percussion rhythm, evoking a strong sense of urgency.”

- **Tourist Trap** (Van Eps) – In this score, Van Eps features flute and harp to provide “dreamy, ‘water’ music for the underwater scenes.”
- **War Gods of the Deep** (Black) – Near the start of the film, “racing strings...for the waves are...introduced [and] only ease up when the film cuts to the seashore.” Underwater scenes are usually scored with lightly orchestrated impressionistic music. Overall, Black creates “a virtual floating symphony of haunting strings, eerie bells and percussion, going for just about every way that richly melodic music can approximate deep water.”

Sea Battles

- **Moby Dick** (Sainton) – Sainton “paints his very own picture of the sea for orchestra with arpeggios for flutes, clarinets, harps and celesta, as well as a scherzo describing the character of Queequeg, the harpooner and friend of Ishmael.” The “[Sea Music](#)” cue represents the sea in a “calmer friendlier mood,” this piece orchestrated with flutes, clarinets, harp, and celeste in “gentle glittering arpeggios” and displaying influences of Ravel and Delius.
- **Moby Dick** (Sainton) – [There She Blows!](#)” is “a terrific, swirling scherzo that combines nautical adventure with a hint of mystery and danger.”
- **The Lost Continent** (Schurmann) – “[Shark / Webster’s Demise](#)” provides underscore when one passenger keels overboard and is quickly seized by a passing shark. “Motifs slip through the orchestra as keenly as the shark’s fin through the water; interjections of brass and percussion evoke the terror”– Once back aboard the Corita (which has survived the typhoon but is now adrift with its propeller enveloped by seaweed), two of the protagonists embrace unaware that the sinuous tentacles of a giant cephalopod (“[The Cephalopod / Ricaldi’s Doom](#)”) are rising from the sea, soon one protagonist entwined in its grasp and pulled into the ocean depths. “Extravagantly undulating orchestral figures suggest the sea-monster’s many-tentacled assault.”
- **Islands in the Stream** (Goldsmith) – In the “[The Island](#)” “gentle ‘waves’ from woodwinds establish sea atmosphere, elegiac solo French horn speaks for lonely Hudson character.... Two ideas meld in haunting musical portrait of a solitary man at peace with the sea. “Is Ten Too Old” underscores the scene in which a hammerhead shark has broken into the bay in which Hudson’s eldest son is swimming—“the lilting theme that opens the cue, while all appears well, is gradually overtaken by a frantic violin ostinato, eventually overlaid by powerful brass.” The “Marlin” fishing sequence is “highlighted by vivid flourishes from woodwinds, fanfares in brass, swirling ideas in strings. The sea comes alive!”- and a post-*Jaws* shark attack sequence which Goldsmith scored with aggressive South Seas rhythms à la Jerome Moross’ *The Sharkhunters*.
- **Jaws** (Williams) – The score for **Jaws** is “a perfect synthesis of two seemingly (and appropriately) opposing ideas: a deliberately monotonous, pounding attack motif for the film’s giant great white shark, and a fusion of swashbuckling, seafaring adventure music.” The action plays out in attack and counterattack – “one part fear and one part righteous revenge. The attack section...dealt with the Great White Shark himself ... in Williams’ musical design, the shark is Evil personified and he is given a

taunting *idée fixe* on the basses, their bows sawing back and forth, a hollow drum and a metallic rapping sound in the background. This is punctuated by brass notes and a howling Stravinskian tuba overhead. The counterattack music consists of an almost swashbuckling fugue used to display the shark chase sequences.”

- **Jaws 2** (Williams) – The sequel opens with a gorgeous, four-note ascending theme for intricately plucked harps, over which the familiar shark ostinato from **Jaws** soon intrudes and eventually overwhelms and devours the delicate harp theme, just as the megalithic shark did to the hapless divers at the film’s opening. “[Ballet for Divers](#)” is a ballet-like cue, featuring the harp, suggests “the mystery of the ocean” as divers explore the bottom of the ocean and hunt for lobsters.
- **The Great White** (Stevens) – One reviewer noted that Stevens provides “plenty of action music.... Lots of menacing chords, choppy strings, and hurried notes accompany the shark attacks. ... Stevens produced a quite complex score which avoids any exploitive riffs of Williams’ **Jaws**.”
- **Tentacoli** (Cipriani) – The score for **Tentacoli**, is a mix of lighter pop compositions (e.g., “[Small Town Pleasures](#)”) that combine orchestra, special instrumentation (e.g., electric sitar as popularized in the U.S. by artist Vinnie Bell), and possibly even synthesizer-produced elements.
- **The Beast (TV)** (Davis) – One reviewer found the score to have “all the feel of an oceanic adventure with swirling harps and dissonant brass and heavy anvil swipes relating the menace that lurks in the water.” Another reviewer noted the “atmospheric music for the underwater scenes” as “appropriately dark and mysterious.”
- **Piranha** (Donaggio) – A review of this film’s score as presented on CD noted that the “Lost River Theme” track “opens with an adagio arrangement of strings and a spray of chimes; a weird pulse from the synthesizer follows; and then a sugary melody materializes on piano and guitar. ‘No Trespassing’ is similarly eclectic, but much less pretty, as the composer combines moaning strings and stark sequences of electronic notes.... The moaning strings may remind some of us, as well, of Williams’ famous music from *Jaws*. ‘Fatal Rescue’ ...makes use of a see-sawing cello, which Donaggio spikes with chimes, to create a menacing rhythm that suggests the movement of swimming fish as they search for, find and then feast on their victims. ‘Yes, We Have No Piranhas’ also simulates the eating habits of these mean-spirited creatures, these ‘wolves of the water.’ A rapid-fire onslaught of electronic notes, it approximates the slashing movements of their little mouths, and the bubbles that swirl and pop around them, as they tear into prey.” Another reviewer commented on two cues with an underwater motif: “Aquarina” starts off in a classical vein, with “Homunculus” shifting into “a more macabre composition using electronic tonalities for shading.”
- **Killer Crocodile** (Ortolani) – “Ortolani’s central theme is made up of two very different sounding sections. There is the darker murky side and also a full blown symphonic string theme which although dramatic is also melodic and sweeping in its overall impact. The composer makes effective use of strings for the action passages and punctuates and enhances these strings with percussive elements and added synthetics to heighten the tension and provide the listener with some highly dramatic writing. There are also a number of cues within the score that are hauntingly melodic.”

- **Creature** (Van Tongeren) – For the film’s exotic locale with a voodoo undercurrent, composer Van Tongeren employed “ethnic drums and pipes, playing rhythmic phrases or melodies. ... Also, he added, ‘the score became an eclectic blend of orchestral and tribal, with a variety of rhythmic grooves to support the action. The 9/8 figure used for the various escape sequences and the maniacal percussive groove version of the Creature motif stand out to me. I also sampled some new sounds to enhance the Creature.’”
- **Open Water** (Revell) – One reviewer found this score “a mix of ambient electronics that clearly enhance the conditions of the film: the harshness of the open water, and the muddled tones of underwater.... Revell adds some light percussion and chimes in ‘Cleaner Fish’. ‘Finding the Dive Bag on the Boat’ has a very brief moment of pounding drums at the end. ‘Sharks Close’ and ‘Sharks Circle’ slowly crescendo throughout the cues as the tension builds.”
- **Piranha 3DD** (Cmiral) – “As with most film scores featuring aggressive or fearsome water creatures there are shades of ‘Jaws’ to be heard within some of the string arrangements, (check out track six, ‘Eaten in Van’, and track 17, ‘School of Piranhas’ as examples of shrieking Psycho-lite string compositions), although [Cmiral] manages to avoid most of the obvious clichés. In fact...Cmiral flits between the classical orchestral arrangements and more modern, almost prog rock, compositions, making for an interesting and fairly fresh soundtrack.” “Only when the ravenous schools of barbarous prehistoric piranha swarm onto their prey (‘Eaten in Van,’ ‘Struggle at the Pier,’ ‘Depths of the Lake,’ and ‘Battle for the Water Park’) does the score reveal its gore-infested horror conceit (the latter is an especially cataclysmic track for raging percussion, fatalistic strokes of violins, and heralding trumpet measures, a kind of submerged *1812 Overture*-styled thematic display as fish and females face off to the death in the film’s splashy climax)... The final ‘Battle’ track is also heralded by a vicious assembly of cyclical violin figures reaching hysterical velocity, in ‘School of Piranha,’ sounding not unlike an elegant and wonderful string quartet played by raving madmen.”
- **Sharktopus (TV)** (Hiel) – “Hiel said his biggest challenge in scoring SHARKTOPUS was simply getting the right feel for each of the creature’s attacks. “It’s easy to be heavy handed,” he said. “Each attack tended to be different enough where you couldn’t cut-and-paste the same motifs. Sometimes you needed a building progression – I would use that chromatic ostinato thing – it’s in the dive sequence, for example, where the strings would play in clusters, and that goes on for a while sometimes, where he’s dragging the body off. But that ended up being fairly challenging, just finding the right tone for each attack.”

Sea Buddies

- **The Day of the Dolphin** (Delerue) – The love theme that Delerue composed to reflect the scientist’s ability to communicate with the dolphin “is balanced with a mysterious underwater motif, achieved through the use of twangy synthesizer tones over shivering strings, and elsewhere with the metallic tapping of piano strings echoing over sustained string passages and wandering harp notes. The latter motif evokes the distorted sound of hearing noises underwater, and builds a remarkably claustrophobic and eerie mood into these scenes.”
- **The Golden Seal** (Barry and Kaproff) – Barry’s “[Frolic](#)”...accompanies Eric playing in the ocean

with the two golden seals (a briefly referenced plot point is the fact that Eric doesn't feel the chill of the island air when he's around the seals and presumably they also allow him to swim in what must be frigid water as well). Barry's mellow theme rolls through this lyrical sequence intact for the first minute or so, voiced by strings and reeds with a particularly sweet and reflective bridge. As the lengthy scene progresses Barry adds a six-note rhythmic flourish for strings and as Eric's play with the seals begins to be shown with glistening slow motion photography, Barry's score becomes increasingly majestic, with oboes and high strings handing off the rhythmic figure against swelling French horns and a proud new figure for brass, all climaxing in a section for pounding percussion before the final bars of keening, high pitched strings in the classic Barry manner. While slow motion sequences like this can easily become cloying or overdone, Barry's flowing, mellifluous underscoring is perfect for the balletic imagery."

"Kaproff scores '[Swimming Lessons](#)' with a playfully droll rhythmic treatment for woodwinds, flutes and strings as the golden seal playfully teaches her calf how to swim along the rocks of the shoreline. An extended flute solo gives way to brass and pizzicato strings as the cautious pup enters the water. This is an extended sequence of 'animal acting' with no dialogue so Kaproff's playful music is particularly important in moving the scene along."

- **Where the River Runs Black** (Horner) – One reviewer wrote that "'Underwater Ballet' is lively and expressive, with sparkling synths and sun-kissed, lightly-tapped percussion that gives way to a dance-like pan flute element. Later, 'The Dolphins' is playful and similarly upbeat, with florid rhythmic ideas and animated pan flute lines." The specific—and darker—music underscoring underwater scenes when the dolphins are attacking the alligator is heard near the end of the "Underwater Ballet" cue.
- **Free Willy** (Poledouris) – Poledouris used "the whole arsenal of stunts to achieve and create a milieu with strong associations to the sea, the whale and the freedom. It's all written in a graceful style combining orchestral and electronic... elements with a slight touch of sentiment just to make sure you get a little tear at the corner of the eye. Poledouris has shifted the weight from the traditional sweeping strings, even though they can be noted, to more light and tingling electronic percussion and other such devices and...it works much better to the majestic brass and soft woodwinds and the other instruments."
- **Free Willy 3–The Rescue** (Eidelman) – "The score's main melody undulates on a gentle tide of violins, the higher end strings taking the melody over a rhythmic surge of lower violas, cellos and a twinkling harp. "[Obsession](#)" lets the theme resound beautifully, high end violins suggesting the voice of the whale. First in "[Awakening](#)" and later in "[Redemption](#)", [Francine] Poitras' voice gives the cues a powerful tonality, her throaty voice speaking the whale's outrage against the hunters. ... [Eidelman] eloquently captured the musical world of the whale with an intensely beautiful score."
- **Andre** (Rowland) – Rowland "plays the sentimental chords with cues that tug at all the right heart strings. ... At its most inspired, string instruments (harp, guitar) and wind instruments combine to create an amalgam of vivid little vignettes that are enduring and quite attractive. At other times, a lovely piano melody is strikingly set off by a lute or a harp to evoke images that may work very well within the context of the screen action but that also have a magic of their own as music."

- **Flipper** (McNeely) – The cue “Abandoned and Alone” “sounds right at home underwater with a mix of the synth effects” that are now associated with the scores of many films (e.g., **The Abyss**.)” This track, heard when Flipper’s mother is killed, combines pan flute (to convey Flipper’s sadness at being left alone) and percussion (to convey the brutality of the killing).
- **Whale Rider** (Gerrard) – “Gerrard successfully blends strings and electronic elements with traditional Maori female vocals and shell flutes to add to the flavor of the film—the music has a haunting quality if only because of the instrumentation. ...there are no distinct themes in Gerrard’s writing. She relies mainly on the emotional shifts and orchestration to achieve whatever her desired effect may be.” “Gerrard’s main weapon is the use of long-held minor chord composition, realized by synth string atmospherics, light percussive work and piano and zither interpretations. ...in keeping with the film she uses very low, very dark shell flutes that are common to the Maori people and traditional female Maori vocals. At other times...floating zither and piano melodies that help focus the mood and emotion of the film.”
- **Finding Nemo** (Newman) – One reviewer deemed this film’s score as “the perfect score with which to study Tom-Newmanisms, from the forceful beats of his rhythms to the completely bizarre and wildly creative electronics and percussion employed in his ensemble. The nervous, constant movement of the orchestral performances so well represents the nature of fish in general, and the pastoral elements of Newman’s piano and strings capture the spirit of the search and the alliances necessary to make it work. ...some sound effects straight from Skywalker Sound offer some soothing oceanic ambience in other cues.”

Sea Subs (Fantasy Subs)

- **Atlantis, The Lost Continent** (Garcia) – When the submarine first appears on screen, much of the sequence plays with only the drone of the submarine’s engine with little to no underscoring. But a later appearance of the submarine is accompanied by snippets of the “underwater” or submarine-related music that Garcia compose, specifically rising brass to accompany the submarine breaking the surface as well as harp flourishes conveying the unseen yet felt presence of the submarine when it dives beneath the waves.
- **Atlantis: The Lost Empire** (Howard) – As the lost city becomes the focus and setting for the adventure, the score becomes much more colorful, with Howard taking a sharp turn toward the mysterious with [Milo Meets Kida](#) conveying a dark and mysterious atmosphere by combining haunting vocals, driving percussions, and woodwind accents.
- **20,000 Leagues under the Sea** (Smith) – The score commences with “[Prelude](#)”—clamorous Main Title music that “forcefully evokes the thunderous rise and fall of a turbulent seascape, the massive swell characterized by weighty undulating phrases for brass and woodwind—the whole dominated by a startling, repeated dual clash of huge cymbals.”
- **Captain Nemo and the Underwater City** (Morley) – “[Underwater](#)” “lays down many of the techniques and effects Morley would bring to the film’s undersea sequences: a percolating, sonar-like bubbling effect, glissando figures for flute, harp and woodwinds and atmospheric string and bass

undercurrents.” As a schooner and its passengers sink into the sea, [Underwater](#) “evokes their surroundings with rippling, octatonic textures for woodwinds and harp as well as sonar-like effects on wood block. Captain Nemo’s divers suddenly emerge, swimming toward the crew to *Misterioso*, muted brass readings of the main theme....”

“At various points in the narrative, denizens of the deep threaten the underwater city and its inhabitants, and Morley’s score takes a consistent approach to these dangers: stabbing, harshly orchestrated figures for brass over swirling string and harp textures, first for an attack on Nemo and the outsiders by a shark during a diving expedition (‘Shark Fight’) and later during two attacks by the stingray-like sea monster Mobula (‘Mobula Attack’ and ‘Lead Up to Mobula Attack’).”

- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** (Sawtell and Shefter) – This film’s score provides several interesting examples of orchestration:

“[Brave Volunteers / Squid Attacks](#)” – The romantic Seaview theme sounds at the beginning of this lengthy and evocative sequence in which the sub locates and taps an underwater telephone cable with the help of scuba-divers.... Heavy use of harp glissandos marks the sub’s initial exploration of an underwater trench along with artful, impressionistic variations of the title tune for cello and flute. Sawtell and Shefter paint a beautiful underwater portrait with celeste, harp and strings, sending the primary Seaview melody through numerous variations. Danger is afoot, however, and dissonant textures for brass and strings join the Debussy-like progressions as first a shark and then a giant squid emerge from the depths to menace the divers.”

[Minefield Explosions](#)” – When the Seaview blunders into an underwater minefield, a “pulsating bass line adds suspense as massed strings and brass underscore the sub’s attempts to extricate itself from the minefield’s cables. Warm, tonal scoring returns as two Seaview crewmen bravely volunteer for the deadly task of cutting through the tangled cables in the ship’s minisub.” Attempting to cut the Seaview loose, the minisub collides with two mines that explode, the disaster being accompanied by “[s]hrill, overpowering brass and strings.”

“[Enemy Torpedoes/The Monster Attacks](#)” – “A musical Klaxon of shrill strings and woodwinds over barking exclamations from brass sounds as torpedoes from a pursuing U.N. sub streak past the Seaview. Sawtell and Shefter alternate militaristic brass fanfares and low-key suspense writing over the alarmist torpedo effects as the Seaview attempts to dive below the U.N. sub’s crush depth in order to escape without firing on it. The undersea monster music from ‘The Squid Attacks’ returns as the Seaview must fend off a giant octopus that attaches itself to the vessel.”

- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea (TV – Second Season)** (Goldsmith) – As one reviewer wrote, Goldsmith provided the score with “a strikingly dark theme based around a three-note brass motif against some reverbed, metallic percussion, climaxing in...[a]...trombone slide “howl”.... Built around Goldsmith’s questing three-note Seaview motif, the score opens with a striking series of variations of the theme set against an eerie, wailing novachord – Goldsmith even introduces a musical pun as the launch of Seaview’s diving bell is underscored with the low, pulsing ringing of bells. As the episode’s principal menace, a giant whale, is introduced, Goldsmith launches a volley of threatening brass effects and introduces a ripping waltz-like figure...; the post-title sequence erupts with a harrowing

brass alarm and a jumpy, agitated variation of the Seaview theme as the episode titles are viewed over shots of the rampaging whale.”

- **SeaQuest DSV (TV)** (Debney) – For this TV series, Debney composed a score with a “great – large, brassy and wrapped around a great theme...but [having] a wonderful punchy rhythm to it.” This theme is first heard after a choral opening, appearing “sometimes aggressive (‘Preparing for Battle’), sometimes full of the wonders of the deep through soft harp arpeggios and strokes of the bell tree as in ‘[Bridger’s Dream](#)’, in one instance whimsical (‘[Darwin Speaks](#)’).” Highlights of Debney’s score for **SeaQuest DSV** are two cues from the episode titled “Knights of Shadows” in which SeaQuest finds a sunken ship full of ghosts, with Debney providing “a suitably spooky feel through low instruments and clinks from the piano, with a hint of tragic romance offered by the violins.”
- **Fantastic Voyage** (Rosenman) – As the Proteus enters the Benes’ brain, “Rosenman’s score takes on a fragile, crystalline quality” [“[The Human Brain](#)”]. One reviewer noted that Rosenman experimented with varied counterpoints of *klangfarben* (tonal colors of sound), ...the score...largely comprised of nonmelodic motifs. . . . The first real musical passage is heard as the microscopic *Proteus* enters the bloodstream and floats amid large globules of liquid—this is a woodwindy motif over harp, with a slight, subtle four-note adventuresome melody, suitable for the start of this ‘fantastic voyage.’ Rosenman provides varied musical textures for the subsequent sequences as the *Proteus* makes its way to the brain: long, drawn-out string passages are used for the journey through the heart; heavy percussion and woodwind sounds are heard as the crew removes ventricular fibers from the *Proteus*’s clogged intake valves; high-woodwind warbles over harp and strings accompany the attack of the antibodies, while deep, percussive rumbles underscore the attack of the white corpuscles. The score is bound together by a single recurring thematic motif, a four-note melody with the accent on the third note—this theme reaches its fullest variant during the deminiaturization at the successful completion of the mission.”

“[Optic Nerve/End Cast](#)” – As the surviving crew members swim along the optic nerve toward the eye, light impulses flash along the length of the nerve, the light effects accompanied by a blending of “high range woodwinds, plucked strings and buzzing flutes in repeated pulses.... Rumbling double basses, bongos, snare drums and timpani suspensefully accompany the removal of the crew from Benes’ eye on a glass slide. Strings and brass ascend along with the exhausted adventures as they return to normal size....”

Sea Subs (War Subs)

- **The Hunley** (Revell) – For this film the composer provided a “a very atmospheric, brooding and dark score combining orchestra with eerie electronic textures.”
- **The Enemy Below** (Harline) – A wavering brass motif sound is associated with the destroyer’s radar antenna, while a glissando effect played by xylophone, vibraphone and piano accents the illuminated blips shown on the ship’s radar screen. “As the film nears the final battle, Harline’s score plays for nearly nineteen minutes of intense action, with strident minor mode variations on the destroyer theme competing with the thrusting trombone chords of the submarine motif.” “The crushing submarine chords maintain their presence throughout the lengthy sequence of the crews abandoning ship....”

Sinuuous string lines (based on the secondary submarine theme) work against the urgent calls of the destroyer clarion calls...., with the threatening brass chords finally reaching a massive, high register just as the submarine explodes and destroys both ships.”

- **On the Beach** (Gold) – “Gold took his cue from Kramer by scoring the film’s first half as he might have done a traditional domestic drama, so that when he introduces searing, Herrmannesque shock chords and dissonant piano ornamentation for the submarine’s journey into the decimated outer world halfway through the film, the effect is immeasurably disorienting.” The first underwater-related cue (albeit in the guise of “Waltzing Matilda”) is heard in the “Main Title” as the American submarine Sawfish surfaces and makes its way to Melbourne. “The Desolate City” – As the Sawfish arrives at San Francisco late in the film, “Gold’s theme for the outside world – a questing, twelve-tone row for French horns with bombastic accompaniment – follows the sub into the bay...and sounds furiously as Captain Dwight Towers (Gregory Peck) looks through his periscope at the lifeless city.” “The Mysterious Signal” – “The twelve-tone French horn theme is reprised as the Sawfish approaches San Diego...., adding a pulsing clarinet imitating the signal emanating from the city.”
- **Ice Station Zebra** (Legrand) – Legrand described his score for **Ice Station Zebra** as “all acoustic instruments, nothing electronic.”
- **The Hunt for Red October** (Poledouris) – Much of Poledouris’ score consists of short, subdued cues, which mix orchestra and electronics while matching the film’s understated tone. Poledouris was relieved that the film’s “movement and pacing” meant he didn’t have to artificially hype the action. Poledouris comment: “I got to stretch the tempo and tried to provide a sense of the size and mission of the sub itself.” In only a few longer cues did Poledouris have the opportunity to bring his full orchestral and choral forces to bear. “[Red Route 1](#)” depicts underwater navigation with a musical sense of wonder.
- **Crimson Tide** (Zimmer) – The composer, commented one reviewer, “continues to exhibit his penchant for stimulating orchestration and appealing rhythm.... The music relies primarily on rhythm, its subdued martial melody driven along by a consistent synth drum beat, strokes of violin and chorus.”
- **U-571** (Marvin) – Marvin’s score for **U-571** provided “stirring, ostinato-driven action writing for pounding orchestra, atmospheric harmonics for the underwater eeriness and a strong patriotic theme.” On the overall approach to the score, Marvin noted that: “There were a couple of sound effect-like things, but basically it’s an acoustic score.... It’s ninety-nine percent acoustic. We wanted to stay away from anything electronic or metallic sounding because we knew it was going to be covered. Some of the most intense and suspenseful scenes have little if any music.”

Sea Spies

- **Sea Hunt** (Llewelyn) – Buddy Morrow’s [cover](#) of this TV show’s theme song leads off with “a machine gun-like trumpet blast—much like the intro to John Barry’s opening theme for **From Russia with Love**, followed by quivering violins and the sound of ocean surf, with the theme’s melody then being played in a jazz mode (a saxophone lead with orchestral accompaniment comprised of violins,

trumpets, and percussion). In mid-cue, two fog horn blasts reintroduce the sea motif, the melody then being reprised by saxophone, violin, and trumpet (conveying suspense, danger, and possibly also romance). The cue wraps up with a reprise of the sound of ocean surf and a short repetition of the machine-gun like trumpet blast.”

- **Thunderball** (Barry) – Barry’s score for this film includes “a great deal of highly atmospheric, haunting underwater music” (e.g., for 007’s surveillance of Largo’s operation, emphasizing low flutes and undulating, suspended textures). Barry’s thematic material for this score is “beautifully sandwiched between three stunning orchestral textures: a hypnotic concoction to evoke the film’s extensive underwater scenes; ...driving brass, which Barry uses to solve the pacing problems of having a final battle that takes place in the slowed down environment of the undersea; and the lush bellows of harps, strings and flutes to score the exotic beauty of the ocean.” Barry uses vibes “for a great, mysterious underwater effect.”

Early on, Barry introduces a slow and subtle expression of the pulsating *007* theme he first created for **From Russia with Love**. This theme became the basis for Barry’s scoring of the film’s spectacular underwater battle. The “[007](#)” Theme is heard in both “[Bond Joins the Underwater Battle](#)” and “[Underwater Mayhem](#)” which feature “slow, powerful orchestrations capped by shrill woodwinds and staccato percussion.”

“The Bomb” is actually three cues totaling nearly six minutes for a tension-filled sequence in which the Vulcan’s SPECTRE pilot is murdered underwater and Largo’s minions steal the atomic bombs aboard, all set to a series of variations on the midsection of the Bond theme; here, and often in later underwater sequences, Barry deploys flute, strings, vibraphone and piano in repeating patterns.

When Bond goes diving beneath Largo’s yacht, and again Barry turns to variations of the Bond theme, but with far more urgency and what would later become a Barry-Bond trademark, strings and xylophone together; vibraphone and strings play repeating phrases while shrill bass figures denote hand-grenade tosses into the water (this cue, too, is truncated but plays full as “Bond Below Disco Volante” on the LP).

A brief romantic interlude for Bond and Domino underwater is among the most beautiful in the score, a Debussy-style impressionistic passage for harps, flutes, strings and vibraphone. Later in the film Barry’s “Bomb” motif returns, with a heroic spin and swirling strings, as NATO divers plunge into the sea and the underwater battle begins. Although the first minute and a half is unscored, music returns when Bond reenters the water and “007,” along with its shrieking piccolos and escalating-key variations, dominates much of the sequence (“Bond Joins Underwater Battle” on the expanded CD).

- **Never Say Never Again** (Legrand) – One reviewer cites as an example the same track (“[Fight to the Death with the Tiger Sharks](#)”) underscoring Bond being trapped underwater with sharks in pursuit. “One can picture very easily how Barry would approach this and underscore the peril. Legrand, though, decided to use saxophone, of all things, for part of this scene. It adds nothing to the dramatic situation and only pushes us to care less for the situation than we otherwise would.” Further, the review deemed the score as “too loud where it ought to be soft and moody, and it’s quiet or nonexistent where it should move things along briskly. For example, ...[an] unnecessary loud,

rhythmic piece for SPECTRE's recovery of the missiles [['Plunder of a Nuclear Missile'](#)] seems highly out of place for this quiet underwater scene. An obnoxious saxophone arrangement of the theme song underscores the love scene betwixt Bond and Fatima (Barbara Carrera) on the yacht, plodding along and going through the motions, but failing to move into the scene intimately; the cue remains during the couple's underwater exploration, and sounds dreadfully out of mood for both incidences."

Sea Treasures

- **Mara Maru** (Steiner) – During the second dive sequence, a trumpet fanfare and violin flourishes signal danger as several sharks briefly appear.
- **Beneath the 12-Mile Reef** (Herrmann) – “Herrmann, who was always keen to technological innovations, made excellent use of the new sonic environment by placing his nine harps throughout the stereo field. Also, the underwater cues (‘The Undersea,’ ‘The Airline,’ ‘The Undersea Forest,’ ‘Descending,’ ‘The Lagoon’ and ‘The Sea Garden’) were re-recorded on a soundstage to create a reverb track which was then dubbed with the original orchestra stem, doubling the three tracks of recorded sound to six and adding extra space and depth (‘Re-recorded’ here does not mean re-performed but broadcast out of speakers and recorded anew.)” Two other examples of Herrmann’s orchestrations for this score:

“The Lagoon” – “A lush romantic *valse d’amour* featuring strings and harp accompanies Tony and Gwyneth on a balletic underwater swim. Tension mounts as they spot a dangerous stingray.”

“The Fight” – “As Tony and Arnold find themselves in a climactic underwater fight, the harps and underwater texture return to the fore, interrupted by insistent brass chords as the combatants gasp for air. The harps grow especially frantic when Arnold becomes entangled in seaweed and is rescued by Tony.”

- **The Sharkfighters** (Moross) – The film’s scenes showing “sharks and fighters in action” are scored with “a punchy, vivacious huapango rhythm for drums and staccato brass. This is offset by more lyrical moments representing the beauty of both the scenery and the peace and tranquility of the deep: the leisurely central Andante being an underwater ballet as Ensign Harold Duncan...explores the wonders of the reef when searching for the life-saving Octopus fluid. The strident Allegro Nervoso returns with a trombone glissando as sharks attack the intrepid Ben Staves – here Moross musically and imaginatively conjures up far more terror and excitement than ever appeared on screen.”
- **Boy on a Dolphin** (Friedhofer) – In this score, as one reviewer noted, “Friedhofer deploys every bit of instrumental color at his command to give us a sense of the eerie beauty and essential mystery of the undersea world. Silky strings, sonorous brass, and undulating harp blend with perilous allure.”
- **The Wreck of the Mary Deare** (Duning) – One reviewer noted that Duning’s score for this film is “relatively monothematic, featuring moody, turbulent strains seemingly inspired by the mysterious hulk of the ship itself, and a slightly nautical bass figure evocative of the dark seas in which it is found. Duning achieved a dark coloration in part from the omission of violins from his orchestra.”
- **Il Misterioso Signor Van Eyck** (Savina) – “The efforts to rescue the treasure in the deep of the sea

are scored [in tracks 21, 25, 27, 29, and 30 on the film's soundtrack CD] with fascinating musical sequences with magic and suspended colours given by instruments like harp, vibe, organ, celesta."

- **Fear Is the Key** (Budd) - The soundtrack CD for this film's score includes one underwater-related cue ("[From Sea Bed to Surface](#)") which begins with a mix of suspended strings and other instrumentation in the low registers to accompany action taking below the surface of the ocean, before rising trumpet flares transition into a full orchestra restatement of the score's main theme.
- **The Deep** (Barry) – "Barry evokes the sea...not one of sparkle and beauty but rather one of mystery, danger and darkness, that—as the theme song suggests—comes from "down, deep inside". In "[Your Ship is Dead; Here You'll Need This; Second Dive; Eel Attack](#)," Barry's score moves "from dread expressed by strings in querulous mode, layered with the siren wail of a synthesizer) to outright terror (potently expressed by a blast of brass and woodwinds)."
- **Extreme Dive** (Eidelman) – Eidelman tailored this score specifically for the depths. Thus, the theme is very slow in tempo and haunting in style, extended in all of its incarnations. He maintains a consistent feeling of awe for oceanic depths with the string section of the ensemble. Brass only plays an accompanying role occasionally, with woodwinds and a rumbling piano used to punctuate certain shots in the film with additional layers of drama.

Sea Escapes


- **The Poseidon Adventure** (Williams) – "[Main Title](#)" – The score "begins with rumblings from low in the orchestra which emerge out of the film's sound effects. Unison horns intone a fateful fanfare. A repeated triplet figure suggests the undulations of the sea; against this, the duple-meter principal theme (built from the fanfare and a rising minor scale) creates a rhythmic unsteadiness which mirrors the passengers' attempt to steady themselves aboard the rocking ship. The fanfare reappears over a low, *Close Encounters*-like string figure." As another reviewer similarly noted, the music starts with "low metallic rumblings in the orchestra followed by an imposing theme on horns over a heavy regular ostinato figure illustrating the big powerful ship riding majestically over the undulations of the sea. ... Within this opening music there is also a parallel rhythmic unsteadiness which forecasts disaster." The cue "[The Big Wave](#)" is first heard right before the ship's captain utters a deadpan, "Oh my God." The wave's arrival "is marked by a crescendo followed, for much of this evocative cue, by eerie, bleak, dead-sounding, atonally-tinged music that seems to hang suspended over the aftermath in which cabins and state rooms are submerged when the sea rushes in to claim the vessel. The orchestration, using harps, muted brass and high sustained string chords or regular bass strings and surging, watery rhythms etc. is most impressive."
- **Gray Lady Down** (Fielding) – Several cues – "[Snark Lowered for Mission #1 and #2](#)," "Count Down," "[The Launch](#)," "First Rescue," and "Gate's Sacrifice" – "marry the...symphonics with the eerie strains of a synthesizer, echoing like its own sonic radar in the dark, obscure depths."
- **The Abyss** (Silvestri) – One reviewer provided the following analysis: "The main theme, performed by an impressive choir, only is heard in full during [the CD's last three tracks]—with the exception of the blast of music at the very beginning. The first track is dominated by a not-so-impressive snare

drum solo, and what follows for nine tracks is a depressing droning of electronic bass noises and other uninspiring percussion noises. Then, almost as if the score took on a life of its own (or at least the light bulb hit full brightness in Silvestri's head), the last three tracks are orchestrally immense, with full, multi-level choral accompaniment and thematic intensity (they constitute about 12 minutes of music together). Granted, the scene of alien contact was the pivotal part of the film, but I wish Silvestri had employed some of that choral and orchestral music into the first hour of it as well.” A key example of one element the film’s underwater-themed scoring occurs with “Lindsay’s Close Encounter” which “gives us our first full fledged look at the creatures sharing the undersea environment with the baffled humans; her response...morphs from fear to astonishment to awe, and the music tracks her fluid emotions expertly, blending synth, orchestra, and choir with stunning adroitness. Note, particularly, the bird-call flute and liquid harp decorating the wavering siren call of human voices – sublime. As the rig’s crew has their first communal encounter with the aliens (“[The Pseudopod](#)”), Silvestri begins with sinister-sounding synth scrapes and rumbles; then, as initial suspicion evolves into delight, he gives us a delicate Williams-esque passage of woodwind-led whimsy.”

- **Sphere** (Goldenthal) – For this underwater thriller, a reviewer notes that almost all of Goldenthal’s music “is flavored by water-inspired writing meant to evoke the undersea setting.” “Cleverly,” the reviewer added, Goldenthal “opts to mostly use minimalistic music rather than aleatoric music to represent this aspect. Aleatoric music—which allows the musicians to improvise with a handful of pitches or a repeated phrase—can be very effective at portraying tension spun out of control, but it also has a very free, bottomless sense to it. It’s essentially non-metered, but its drifting essence is more expansive than minimalism. Minimalism is more obsessive, more closely knit and controlled. So while aleatoric effects certainly could have built up an appropriate tension for the stuck-under-the-sea or whodunit side of the story, the use of minimalism makes it that much more constricting and effective. Most of its usage in this score is tightly reigned and somewhat terse which helps both in reinforcing the claustrophobia of living in a bubble at the bottom of the ocean, and in contrasting the very expressive ‘wonderment’ music. It’s a small choice, but ultimately a very clever one.” “[Water Snake](#)” well represents the score’s action music: “It starts with thudding percussion and a string ostinato. Eventually, the trumpets and low brass join the ostinato, and later there is a drum solo. The trumpets come back in, this time bending pitches with the French Horns. Weird percussion work ends the track. This action music is characteristic of the rest of the score.”
- **Deep Rising** (Goldsmith) – Goldsmith’s score is “full of his characteristic, asymmetrical-meter action writing, with the composer taking a number of different rhythmic approaches in different scenes and often with cues. The score is heavy on electronics, but Goldsmith worked to keep the synthesized elements carefully integrated to allow the large group of orchestral players to dominate. The composer’s characteristically jagged, furious horror writing is showcased throughout the score, but particularly in two sequences. In ‘[Let’s Make A Deal](#),’ one of Hanover’s men rises up in the middle of being digested by the creature, with half of his body eaten away, and strings and brass clash in ugly statements to underscore the horrific imagery. ‘Let’s Make A Deal’ was included on the original album, but oddly Goldsmith elected to omit his lurching monstrous march for the full reveal of the ottoio (“Not Every Day”) and its capture of Finnegan—that stark, stabbing cue makes its debut here.” Goldsmith’s main theme, first heard in “[Underwater Grave](#)”, “opens with an atmospheric synth section and moves to a statement of the primary theme, a brassy horn line over pounding drums.” The score’s

balance is more serious, “building the suspense with low-key writing for strings backed with atmospheric synth noises.” “Wet Repairs” is “a particularly effective suspense cue, full of creeping-around music which builds up to a loud and fairly scary brass burst.”

- **Deep Blue Sea** (Rabin) – The fourth track on CD of score from this film provides the main title: “otherworldly synths build and pound louder and louder with a chorus in the background. Something is amiss, something is present, it is unseen.... .things get scarier as the music progresses, the chorus and orchestra burst forth crying and shouting, the pounding beat continues gaining tempo, what can survive such an attack?”
- **The Cave** (Klimek and Heil) - While this score embodies electronics as well as acoustics, one reviewer wrote that the film’s score is primarily “orchestral sounding” for a film about a descent into a Romanian cavern where “very earthy horrors lie dormant and hungry. The dominating Gothic textures of strings and horns and heavy percussion evoke the kind of organic, ancient European horrors better than a cacophony of synth programming, and the score works well in sustaining a haunting tonality of subterranean unease. It’s an effective if overlong score; there is no thematic unity to the score, instead a variety of multi-layered, brooding atmospheres that provoke a number of suspenseful moments in the progression of the film; yet there’s something provocative about the score’s massively measured ambiances and sustained musical strategies that resonates well on one’s home speakers; an onrush of textured tonality and moody misterioso that serves up a haunting heap of miasmatic music, well intentioned and well crafted.”
- **Poseidon** (Badelt) – One reviewer felt that the six cues in the middle of this film’s score album are “boring: interminable action and suspense cues which bluster on, creating a misleading sense of tension and kinetic energy, without ever doing anything really musically interesting. ...part of the problem is that Badelt’s orchestral parts are completely overwhelmed by the chugging, thumping, scraping electronic ‘enhancements’ laid on top, so much so that you can’t hear any of the detail of [the] orchestrations.... Instead, it sounds like someone recorded the sound of the ship’s machinery in mechanical pain.... Once or twice you’ll hear some elaborate horn trill, a big orchestral chord, or interesting ostinato peeking through the mix, as in the 7-minute set-piece “Claustrophobia”.... Probably the best of the action cues is ‘[The Wave](#)’, which has a palpable sense of impending doom as it builds to its dissonant finale.”



SOUND EFFECTS (NATURAL OR ELECTRONIC-SYNTHESIZED) – Natural sound effects entail a composer (and sound technician) incorporating into a film score natural sounds as made by whales or dolphins. Another example would be a composer incorporating the actual (or synthesized) sound of bubbles (e.g., reproducing or creating a gurgling effect). This also could be achieved by having a specific instrument (e.g., harp or piano) play ascending notes with glissando (i.e., performed with a gliding effect by sliding one or more fingers rapidly over the keys of a piano or strings of a harp). Another natural sound would be the clanking of metal on the hull of a submarine or some hard object banging on or against a rock under the water) and incorporating these sounds directly into the film’s score. In contrast, electronic/synthesized entails a composer using an electronic device to

generate sounds (e.g., pinging to represent detection of a distant or approaching surface vessel, submarine, or aquatic creature) that are integrated into the composer's scoring of a specific scene in a film.

Sea Mutants

- **The Day of the Dolphin** (Delerue) – “Delerue loved using strings in his compositions for film scores, he also had an interest in using electronic instruments for film scores—and he took the plunge into using an electronic instrument for the first time in his score for **The Day of the Dolphin** by employing the Ondes Martenot by “[tuning] the instrument to an entirely new musical wavelength, making it approximate a piercing yet melodic version of the dolphin’s sonar.”
- **Tourist Attraction** (Van Eps and Frontiere) – For two of this scores tracks (“Ichthyosaurus Mercurius” and “Ichthyosaurus Mercurius Thaws and Escapes”), Dominic Frontiere used electronic sounds to signal the fish-lizards whose high frequency sounds eventually destroy the dam.

Sea Battles

- **Tintorera: Killer Shark (Poledouris)** – Poledouris’ scoring for the shark also “includes what has been termed ‘**Woombas & Shark Groans**,’ which are collected into an extended mix on Disc 1, Track 12. In addition to his synthetic shark theme, which remained mostly tonal and musical, Basil created a series of frightening, reverberant even surrealistic sound designs, often going completely atonal, to essentially create the sound of being underwater, circled by a wheezing killer shark. These the Woombas, heard on Disc 1, tracks 12 and 23b.” “The shark groans are musically-created sound effects representing the noise made by the shark in the film. [The] sound editors or sound effects editors dubbed in the sound of the shark’s heavy, labored breathing, suggesting that the shark is unwell (which may explain its heightened viciousness), TO SERVE AS AN OSTINATO OF DANGER WHEN THE SHARK IS NEAR. In reality, sharks are silent hunters and have no organs for producing sounds.”
- **Piranha** (Donaggio) – “While the score provides both promenade-like marches (a la **Jaws**) for the land-based scenes, the score also features “electronic echoing effects and synthesizer warbles, the latter heard interestingly during the fish attacks.”
- **La Notte degli Squali** (Cipriani) – A review of this score noted that Cipriani “fully embraces the then-in vogue electronic action film scoring style: lots of varied percussion and robust, pumped-up suspense music executed via brooding, stark synths. However, there are touches of symphonic instrumentation such as brass and strings, albeit in limited doses.” “The exciting and hypnotic main title, ‘[Preludio e Titoli di testa](#)’ [Track 1], is an infectious mix of energetic rhythms and adventurous synth chords, displaying Cipriani’s penchant for authoring great, memorable themes. It’s deftly interspersed throughout the score, mixing driving percussion with a melodic fanfare. ‘[Acque pericolose](#)’ [Track 2], dominated by relentless percussion and tingling keyboards, is followed by the equally suspenseful yet more upbeat ‘[Cacciatore di squali](#)’ [Track 3] played for eerie rhythms and busy, insistent synthesizers. A surge of stringed activity closes the cue.” “A truncated but welcome return of the main theme sounds during ‘[David in azione](#)’ [Track 4]. Breezy yet filled with an

insinuating danger, [‘Bandidos’](#) [Track 5] is a pleasant percussive dance.... Gentle electric piano tones evoke the main theme in the jazzy [‘David e Liz’](#) [Track 7], softly rendered in Cipriani’s warm, trademark style. A salsa-flavored backbeat comprises [‘Paco’](#) [Track 8], while hyper percussive snaps and jangly chords highlight [‘David fugge’](#) [Track 10], a style revisited in the later cues [‘Juanita’](#) [Track 12] and [‘Inseguimento’](#) [Track 16], both of which are touched with a funky gloss.” “Slinky beats and moody synth chords create a nice sense of danger with [‘Falsa identità’](#) [Track 13], a mood also explored in [‘Attività illegali’](#) [Track 14], which briefly quotes the main theme. [‘Agguato e caccia’](#) [Track 18] is another deliberately-paced suspense piece, with bell-like sounds ringing amidst a swirl of chugging synths. More diverting rhythms and sparkling synths are featured in [‘David si vendica’](#) [Track 20], with the album coming to a close with [‘Titoli di coda’](#) [Track 22], which again features the main theme. If you’re a fan of the Italian electronic scores of composers such as Carlo Maria Cordio and Claudio Simonetti, *La Notte Degli Squali* comes highly recommended.”

- **Anaconda** (Edelman) – The cue “Down River” makes “listener edgy through good use of tom-tom style drum pads and unusual creaking effects.”
- **Open Water** (Revell) – One reviewer offered the following comment on this score: “Revell made no attempts to hide the outcome of the expedition. The music drones without character before dive just as much as it does as the primary characters die. There was definitely no George Fenton-like **Deep Blue** inspiration to be heard before everything goes wrong. Only three subtle deviations from the monotone droning can be discussed. First, Revell uses the chopping of a helicopter blade to represent the arrival of the sharks. As they close in for the kill in ‘Sharks Circle,’ Revell presents a slow banging of a drum to signify death. Otherwise, the only break from the constant droning is the short blast of drums heard as the discovery of the couple’s absence is finally realized.”
- **Bait** (NG and Oh) – The cue “Shotgun and Electric Shark” “culminates in a female soprano melisma that evokes a profound sense of relief and survival, while also perhaps suggesting a kind of sympathy for the death of the great white (who after all was just doing what nature made him to do); that cue nicely segues into ‘Getting Out,’ a poignant denouement for strings that resolves the score with a strings-and-choral lament as the characters finally emerge from their entrapment to see the extent of the damage the earthquake and tsunami inflicted on the coastal town.”

Sea Buddies

- **The Day of the Dolphin** (Delerue) – “While he loved strings, Delerue also had an interest in the progressive use of electronic instruments for film scores. And he would take the plunge with them for the first time on **The Day of the Dolphin** by employing the Ondes Martenot...[tuning] the instrument to an entirely new musical wavelength, making it approximate a piercing yet melodic version of the dolphin’s sonar.” Delerue used the Ondes Martenot with the Bronté (a similar electronic instrument, which could also be played with a bow) to create another “underwater” signature for **The Day of the Dolphin**. This “tank” motif has the quality of echoed, metal percussion. Together, the tank and sonar motifs become our ears to Alpha and Beta’s world, where the sound they hear and communicate with takes on an eerie quality as if refracted through musical water.
- **A Whale for the Killing** (Poledouris) – One reviewer noted the score’s “adroitly modulated whale

sounds integrated to mournful effect” as crucial to the film’s persuasiveness as a pleading against the slaughter of a whale off the coast of Newfoundland.

- **When the Whales Came Home** (Gunning) – One reviewer commented that Gunning’s score for this film “is a haunting piece creating musical seascapes that incorporates real whale sounds and more atmospheric music as well as a fascinating female vocalise.
- **When the River Runs Black** (Horner) – One reviewer described Horner’s score for this film as “a blend of new age and ‘ethnic’ styles, realized on a sampling keyboard. There are some pleasantly airy moments, but most of the score consists of droning pre-set rhythms, over which the composer fiddles with various samples (strings, voice, and, most predominantly panpipe, which comes out sounding more like a circus organ than an authentic South American instrument).”
- **Free Willy** (Poledouris) – “The magic of **Free Willy** is conveyed through Poledouris’ enduring and charming [title theme](#), performed with an unusually large sound from a Los Angeles orchestra. To address the modern sound that the producers of the film were seeking, Poledouris relies heavily on underlying synthetic elements and rhythms. For the action sequences, a sharp, electronic pulse...sets a fast pace and is complimented by continuous brass statements of secondary motifs.”
- **Flipper** (McNeely) – The cue “Sandy Meets Flipper” provides tender underscore, punctuated by a crystalline, tingling sound, as Sandy first interacts with Flipper.
- **Lady in the Water** (Howard) – Present in this score is “a handful of electronic texturing that has often accompanied Howard’s work through the years; its contribution is somewhat minimal, however, limited in extended presentation to the latter half of ‘[Ripples in the Pool](#).’”
- **Whale Rider** (Gerrard) – “Whale Rider...starts with the sound of the ocean, which instantly sets up the mood. Then we hear voice by a girl, with a New Zealand accent, talking about the background of the story with Gerrard’s music. All the tracks from this point on are building up the story piece by piece, taking listener little by little deeper in to the other world. When the album ends, we hear the sound of the ocean again and then we are taken under water and soon we will hear the whale. The story has come to the conclusion. The structure is just so beautifully crafted. There is so much depth in it.” Another reviewer noted that “synth pads, sounding as breezy and liquidy as the ocean itself, appropriately create an atmosphere of vast, seemingly infinite spaces. In a very subtle way, the score is actually quite epic. Occasionally ethnic and electronic percussion are added to the mix and surprisingly, perhaps, it does not interrupt the hypnotizing mood at all, but in fact enhances the epic atmosphere.”

Sea Subs (Fantasy Subs)

- **Atlantis: The Lost Empire** (Howard) – The second half of this film’s score displays Howard’s expertise in electronics as his scoring adds an exotic touch of percussion in the form of chimes, bells, and synthesized metallic elements.
- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Seas** (Goldsmith) – One reviewer noted that Goldsmith, always on the cutting edge of musical technology, “employed such pre-synthesized keyboards as the Novachord and

electronic organ to create unusual and highly effective sonorities. There is also notable use of solo flute, harp, and a versatile brass section, always reflecting the drama of the moment (e.g. the whale attacks, the creature is anesthetized, the crewmen approach the bell inside the whale.”

- **InnerSpace** (Goldsmith) – Several lengthy cues of brass-ripping heroism alternate with the same kinds of electronic sound effects... the twisting of metal, the tingling of light keyboarding, and the occasional rumble of an instrument that can only be the cousin the infamous blaster beam from the original **Star Trek** film score.

Sea Subs (War Subs)

- **The Hunley** (Edelman) – Edelman uses the electronic snare drum as a sort of sound effect for rotating propellers.
- **The Enemy Below** (Harline) – The score’s soundtrack CD includes a short suite of the “ethereal effects” that Harline composed for the radar blips.
- **Below** (Revell) – Revell provided a “a very atmospheric, brooding and dark score combining orchestra with eerie electronic textures.” Many of the cues, observed one reviewer, “are indeed creepy, especially in the first half of the [CD] album: a lot of weird electronic sounds and dark string parts.”
- **Crimson Tide** (Zimmer) – The “Mutiny” cue “sets off with some appropriate electronic pinging and echoing effects, indicative of the underwater war games to follow.”
- **Ice Station Zebra** (Legrand) – As the Tigerfish searches for thin ice through which to surface, we hear “[Under the Ice](#)—“Clever ‘doppler’ effects include water chimes and rattling percussion that blend with austere strings to create a murky, mysterious environment for the delicate procedure.”
- **The Hunt for Red October** (Poledouris) – In “[Ancestral Aid](#),” “the hollow crashes that resound about the opening bars” of this track “are suitably aquatic-sounding,” while “[Chopper](#)” “deploys chattering electronics to replicate the action of a rotor blade....all of which recalls some of the claustrophobic atmosphere and tension portrayed in the film. The “[Ancestral Aid](#)” cue “becomes almost still for a while before deep echoing synth effects are introduced, like the pipes of this vast leviathan being struck and the sound carrying within its cold metal innards.”
- **U-571** (Marvin) – Commenting on the “[Big Leaks](#)” scene, Marvin commented that this cue originally “had all kinds of groans, squeaks, and metallic stuff, because they seemed to go well with the submarine. We found out that they were completely getting in the way of the sound effects so we took them all out.”
- **72 Meters** (Morricone) – One of the score’s highlights is Morricone’s use of the metallic sound of “tapping” that, not having seen the film, this reviewer would describe as akin to the sound that trapped seamen would make by using a metallic object to tap out an SOS against the interior wall of a submerged submarine in an attempt to communicate with the outside world.

Sea Spies

- **Tomorrow Never Dies** (Arnold) – As Bond finds the missing *Devonshire* and explores it, Arnold provides underscore (“Underwater Discovery”) with eerie string passages with electronic effects.
- **The World Is Not Enough** (Arnold) – For the final, in which Bond wreaks havoc aboard Renard’s submarine and then battles him to stop the impending nuclear disaster, Arnold’s “Submarine” cue provides more than ten minutes of nonstop suspense and action music that includes grand orchestral gestures, a driving electronic pulse and references to the “Bond Theme” and to his main theme.
- **Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life** (Silvestri) – As the temple begins to collapse, Lara’s subsequent attempt to escape is accompanied by the “[Shark Attack](#)” cue described as “a pounding electronic pulse, rhythm that repeats beneath a string and brass exchange which is later taken into a brief screaming guitar and then into an almost repeat of the first cue ‘[The Opening](#)’

Sea Treasures

- **Mara Maru** (Steiner) – The third diving scene occurs at night in the midst of a storm with Mason’s dive again accompanied by horns, trumpets, and other orchestration, the most interesting of which is a high-pitched screeching sound, possibly produced by flutes and/or violins playing a sustained high note, heard as Mason attempts to open a locked metal cabinet using an acetylene torch—the screeching is heard only as Mason applies the torch to the metal cabinet.
- **The Wreck of the Mary Deare** (Duning) – Duning’s score for this film, while largely monothematic, added a bit of modern color by including a Novachord synthesizer to suggest a sonar ping for the seafaring scenes.
- **The Deep** (Barry) – One reviewer highlighted the synth as “one of Barry’s most powerful tools in this score; he uses it abundantly, sometimes layering it with or segueing into strings or brass, whenever he wants to evoke the seductive, mysterious, and occasionally perilous call of the sea.” “Shark Bait (Original Version); Coffin Discovers, Death Grip,” notes Kirgo, is a “particularly rich with this remarkable instrumentation, as is ‘Final Dive/Final Eel Attack; End Credits.’”
- **Cave of the Sharks** (Cipriani) – The music for this film’s deep sea sequences proves that Cipriani is not just a composer of pretty, romantic and sexy music – the darker passages for **Cave of the Shark** puts him on equal footing with John Barry and his score for **Thunderball**. The impressionistic semi-abstractions Stelvio invented – his “water music” – employ a few of the common tropes, for instance a pseudo “sonar ping”. By at least the 1950s this device had been adopted by film composers as a sub-aqua soundtrack signifier. But most of Cipriani’s ideas emphasize all that is eerie, strange and unearthly – this is genre music in keeping with horror and science fiction and rightly so, for **Cave of the Shark** features several elements of monstrosity and the occult. Atypical for the composer is his use here of choral voices as tools with which to render the macabre, and the effort (quite successful) demonstrates this composer’s complete dedication to director Ricci’s blueprint.

Sea Escapes

- **Gray Lady Down** (Fielding) - The cue “[Leaky Hatch](#)” employs chimes and subtle strings in a deftly rendered atmospheric composition.”

- **Leviathan** (Goldsmith) – One reviewer felt that Goldsmith made the score distinctive by the use of “a whale-call-like effect in several cues, most effectively in the main title [[‘Underwater Camp’](#) and ‘Situation Under Control’]” Another reviewer noted that the “synthesized whale call...adds mystery and majesty to...suggest...the vastness of the depths and the intelligence and life it harbors.” A third review wrote that the score’s “opening track [[‘Underwater Camp’](#)] features one of Goldsmith’s most unique electronic experiments: he mixed whale calls in with his worldly underwater theme and the resulting combination is different from anything else I’ve heard from Goldsmith.”
- **Sphere** (Goldenthal) – The opening fanfare (“[‘Pandora’s Fanfare’](#)”), while being “appropriately eerie, with low, bubbling water noises and a solo trumpet” isn’t much of a fanfare at all.
- **Deep Rising** (Goldsmith) – Generally, the score is “dominated by overly harsh brass and a generous helping of synths and electronic drums. Weird synth generated noise helps build some suspense but overall not music to swim or relax by the pool to.” Yet the “abundance of twangy, mid-range ‘80s-style electronics is downright shocking, from the fast-paced percussion effects of the opening to the glistening shock chords that erupt every time a CGI tentacle jumps into the frame.”
- **Deep Blue Sea** (Rabin) – While one review noted that the choir added a certain “aquatic” feeling to the score, Rabin’s synthesize effects add to that feeling. “He uses these effects for the shark-motif (or theme), and can be particularly heard at the beginning of track 4 [[‘Main’](#)] on the score CD.” To that reviewer “these effects sound ‘cold’, just like the sea itself is cold. I’m not saying the entire score sounds “aquatic”, but whenever Rabin uses these electronic elements, I am reminded of a cold, seawater environment. Even if you hadn’t seen the movie, and did not know the title of the score, you could still guess that it had something to do with water, or maybe even sharks. I think...Rabin has succeeded in creating the proper “sound” for this movie. ...By using a real orchestra and choir, and letting the electronics stay somewhat in the background, I have much greater respect for Trevor Rabin (personal communication, Jostein Hakesstad).
- **The Cave** (Klimek and Heil) – The majority of the 40 cues on this film’s score album” are ambient electronics, sometimes dissonant, that work well in the film to bring out a creepy sense of dread in the dark places beneath the surface. But beyond the soundscape for the underwater cave setting for the film, the score does very little else. The cues are very short and never have much chance to build into anything besides background music. The few moments when the music adds to the events on screen are times when low strings perform moving bass lines that punctuate the action on-screen (‘Team Enters the Water’, ‘Underwater Search’ and ‘Tyler’s Mission’).”



SINGLE VOICE OR CHORUS – This device entails the use of single voice (often female) or multiple voices (e.g., a male chorus) with lyrics or wordless vocals to create a sense of being surrounded, something wondrous, or an emotion (e.g., fear, joy, or patriotism). In some cases this sound equates with sirens, mermaids, or something ethereal or otherworldly.

Sea Mutants

- **Aquamarine** (Hirschfelder) – Early in the film, before we even catch a glimpse of the mermaid, we are introduced to the sound of her voice via Hirschfelder’s score, courtesy of out-takes gathered from the humming and giggling of actor **Sara Paxton**, which were then sampled and sculpted into melody. It was Hirschfelder’ inspired idea to sample the voice of Paxton who played Aquamarine and weave her mermaid-like singing, humming, and giggling into the opening music cues. David’s idea gave the mermaid a presence much earlier on in the story than when she actually appears on screen. This scoring was written as if the mermaid is calling out from the rocks in order to lead our two heroines to her. The composer then weaves these themes throughout the score, richening and deepening them as they progress.
- **Waterworld** (Howard) – This score’s “supernatural elements are enhanced by a haunting choir-and-strings line, a sweeping and impressive melody...given prominence in ‘[The Bubble](#),’ where it emerges in all its awe-inspiring splendor from a tentative string introduction”

Sea Battles

- **Orca** (Morricone) – At one point in the film’s score, the orchestra is joined by solo female voice (Edda Dell’Orso) providing wordless vocalizations of the main theme. “Through the music, we identify with the emotions of the whale—his idyllic love for his mate...and his unaccountable sorrow at her needless and cruel loss.”

Sea Buddies

- **When the Whales Came** (Gunning) – As one reviewer noted of this film’s score, “One can feel the sea and hear the whales talking to each other in this short Debussy like suite that is further enhanced by a solo soprano beckoning one to the ocean.” Another reviewer commented that Gunning composed “a haunting melody set against oscillating whole-step intervals. The soprano solo is interwoven with slowed-down whale songs to create a unique, moving effect.”
- **Free Willy 3 – The Rescue** (Eidelman) – One reviewer described Eidelman’s approach to the score for this film as providing “an ethereal ambiance, beautifully embellished by a haunting female vocal...and driven by primitive percussion instruments that echo the ancient world from which the whale has come.”
- **Flipper** (McNeely) – The cue “[Main Title](#),” featuring a wordless vocal by Crosby, Stills and Nash and described by one reviewer as “a fluid lyrical anthem,” underscores a lengthy scene of dolphins swimming underwater.
- **Lady in the Water** (Howard) – The score opens “sweet and magical enough in ‘[Prologue](#)’. Ethereal...choir, a light fantasy tinkling and the main theme or the blue world theme showing its fantastical qualities. What’s above all surprising about this opening track is the truly amazing piano moment that almost never resurfaces again in the score, and that’s truly a shame. The darkness theme mysteriously in between the fantasy shows us the sea creatures’ threat and presence. ... Choral use in the score is mature as well, with the high female wordless vocals suiting the subject delightfully well. Howard rarely allows a full performance of the Blue World theme to go by without accompanying the

ensemble with the choir.”

- **Whale Rider** (Gerrard) – One reviewer found that Gerrard “successfully blends strings and electronic elements with traditional Maori female vocals and shell flutes to add to the flavor of the film—the music has a haunting quality if only due to the instrumentation.” Gerrard has composed music “like a painter. She has taken a certain mood and emotion and used it to create a landscape. The music is mostly ambience, it is mostly background, but it is very rich. . . . There are so many layers of emotions and feelings happening at the same time that you find yourself weeping just because of the scale of the palette. Strings lead the way and all sorts of sound effects and human voices, including Maori chanting and Gerrard’s own, creates textures. In some occasions we can also hear the traditional instruments used by Maoris, which creates a sense of place and history. The traditional culture of the Maori people is very important in Gerrard’s music in **Whale Rider**. It is like a tin whistle for Ireland. It tells its own story and gives us some kind of perspective of the history. ‘Waka In The Sky’ and ‘Go Forward’ are simply beautiful examples of this.”

Sea Subs (Fantasy Subs)

- **Atlantis: The Lost Empire** (Howard) – One reviewer notes the composer’s “knack for writing simplistically harmonious chord progressions, always substantiated by a strong bass of string and brass, is flavored with an array of solo vocalists. Female sopranos are well used alone and in chorus to represent the majesty of the seas, and a fuller adult chorus reflects the ghosts of the empire's citizens with haunting beauty.”
- **The Mysterious Island of Captain Nemo** (Ferrio) – Ferrio scored this TV series and theatrical film, “using strings, but builds upon it a more complex wall by mixing the string carpet in combination with a female voice..., dramatic choral pizzicato interludes, and with some unusual instruments such as pipes, and the sitar.”
- **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** (Sawtell and Shefter) – Unifying the score is the catchy title song “[Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea](#)” – “a dreamy, languid ballad benefiting from surging, Debussy-influenced orchestral textures moving beneath Avalon’s vocal. It is further enhanced by a haunting female chorus, echoing siren-like in the wake of the song over shots of a desolate polar seascape just before the Seaview makes its dramatic forty-five degree entrance from the ocean depths.

Sea Subs (War Subs)

- **Below** (Revell) – As one reviewer commented: “In a moment of experimental lust, Revell adds the sound of human breathing...to the mix.”
- **Crimson Tide** (Zimmer) – “The choir, dissonant and mystical,” as one reviewer noted, is “clearly utilized for the film’s locale, the lonely open sea.” The “use of choir...humanizes the ambivalent rhythm of the suspense and action music.”
- **The Hunt for Red October** (Poledouris) – The cue “[Hymn to Red October](#)” spurs a Russian nuclear submarine, commanded by Ramius, on its journey toward defection and freedom, “each triumphant surfacing greeted with a rousing choral crescendo.” Use of choir and orchestra imbues “the narrative

with a mythic force, stressing the legendary heroism, the nobility of the quest, and so on. ... On the other hand, the music also reflects the technological aspect of the subject – the mechanical grindings and clashing of two hostile submarines.”

- **K 19: The Widower** (Badelt) – The real heroes of the film are the ones who sacrifice themselves with quiet resolve. The cue “[Reactor](#)” “consists of cues originally composed by Richard Einhorn for the silent film, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. Using it as a temp track, it was re-arranged by Walter Murch during editing, and then re-recorded again by Badelt. The result is haunting music that accompanies the courageous crewmembers as they willingly expose themselves to high doses of radiation in order to repair the sub’s nuclear reactor. Beginning with the ominous tolling of a distant bell, the piece segues into a solemn female choir. Not surprisingly, it’s a cue infused with a heavy dose of solemn dread and quiet stoicism.”

Sea Spies

- **Never Say Never Again** (Legrand) – The longest cue in the score, nearly five minutes, begins with a sexy saxophone for Bond’s tryst with Blush and then turns ominous with a dramatic drumbeat and suspenseful strings as she takes him scuba diving, leaving him to be devoured by electronically guided sharks. Legrand adds wordless voices for unusual colors, although the orchestra dominates in the film mix (“Fight to the Death with Tigersharks” on the LP).

Sea Treasures

- **Boy on a Dolphin** (Friedhofer) – In several cues, the score is enhanced by the addition of a single uncanny touch: the wordless siren song of a human voice supplied by Marni Nixon.
- **Extreme Dive** (Eidelman) – Eidelman employs the voice of Francine Poitras (continuing a collaboration that proved quite successful in **Free Willy 3: The Rescue**) to provide the expected female vocals to represent the sea in several cues.

Sea Escapes

- **The Abyss** (Silvestri) – One reviewer noted that “a choir personifies the delicate translucent alien life form hiding below. Near the film’s climax, all three motifs merge into one chorus, a hymn for an uncertain future. The music tells us there’s still a mystery, but perhaps a better world will come of it all.”
- **Deep Blue Sea** (Rabin) – A score highlight is the choral elements provided by the L.A. Master Chorale. One reviewer noted, as the “complete opposite of the synthesized elements, music-wise, the very live and mystical chorus adds the real life” to the score. The first track (“[Aftermath](#)”) of the soundtrack album is “the closing credits music... with a beautiful synthesized piano opening the piece, followed by horns and synthesized strings. There’s a simply beautiful guitar solo meshed with the chorus, ending the track with a brief orchestral/choral flourish.” “The mood of the album picks up tempo and intensity, starting halfway through ‘[Journey](#)’, which kicks in with the aquatically aligned chants of the L.A. Master Chorale and pounding percussion along with soothing synthesized strings and horns. It gains in intensity quickly from there, exploding, the chorus screaming while a steadily

increasing synthesized string accompaniment rhythmically beats into an animalistic fury. Then a very strange whistling is heard, punctuating the alienation effect that the music has on your senses.”

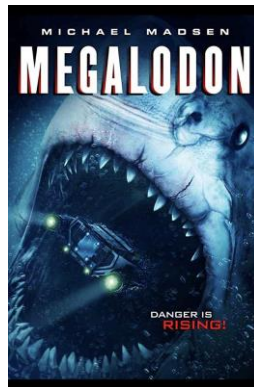
CONCLUSIONS

COMING SOON

As we near the end of this journey into the **SOUNDS OF UNDERWATER SCORING**, and if you have been following the trailers for upcoming films on IMDB.com, YouTube.com, or at your local theater, it will not come as a surprise that, as of mid-summer 2018, your local Bijou or in-home silver screen would soon be hosting a half dozen films with underwater-related plots, each film falling within one or another of our Sea Genres. These films are:

SEA BATTLES: Megalodon (on SYFY TV in August 2018)

(score by Christopher Cano, Mikel Shane Prather, & Chris Ridenhour)



SEA MONSTERS: Godzilla: King of the Monsters (score by Bear McCreary)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVDtmouV9kM>

SEA MUTANTS: Aquaman (score by Rupert Gregson-Williams)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDkg3h8PCVU>

SEA MUTANTS: The Little Mermaid (score by Jeremy Rubolino)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4LfNltVQqE>

SEE BUDDIES: Penguins (score by Harry Gregson-Williams)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VubxHFy7ocE&t=7s>

SEA SUBS (WAR SUBS): Hunter Killer (score by Trevor Morris)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnP_z3qXDCQ

In fact, over the summer, I caught the latest Sea Genre film, **The MEG**, in a local theater. As I watched the film's plot unfolding and listened to the film's score by Harry Gregson-Williams, the thought struck me that the film's plot reflected at least five Sea Genres: Sea Monsters, Sea Battles, Sea Subs (Fantasy Subs), Sea Treasures, and Sea Escapes. This film challenged Gregson-Williams to compose a score enhancing action scenes taking place both on and below the surface of the ocean, including "vertical scenes" where mini-sub's descend into (or rise from) the ocean's depths and "horizontal scenes" where the protagonists (e.g., mini-sub's and Megalodon) move through the water. Also, other scenes called for the score to heighten uncertainty one moment and fear the next in the face of unseen and yet unknown terrors. How did Gregson-Williams score give a sense of the ocean's depth or pressure, especially when (spoiler) a monstrous creature is about to crush a mini-sub? The film's score (as presented on the film's soundtrack CD) can be heard in the following tracks: "[Sub Disaster](#)," "[A New World](#)," "[Jonah Descends](#)," "[Prehistoric Species](#)," "[Shark Cage](#)," "[Beach Attack](#)," and "[Jonas vs Meg](#)."



The MEG (Harry Gregson-Williams)

Anatomy of a Scene: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBkauK1aSLE>

Gregson-Williams commented on his score for **The MEG**:

“For THE MEG, I set out to create a memorable recognizable sonic motif which follows the mystery of the great Megalodon - something robust in nature, which acted as a kind of warning call and instilled an immediate sense of fear and suspense when signaled,” said Gregson-Williams. “In search of this sound, I stumbled upon the conch as an instrument of musical focus. Its call was both distinctive and ancient, and I felt it offered a voice to the vast terror of a concealed underwater world.” (Source: Randall Larson’s [Soundtrax](#))

If you catch **The MEG** in a theater or on TV, which of the above five Sea Genres do think best captures the film’s plot motif? And which Scoring Devices do you hear Gregson-Williams drawing upon to score the film’s various scenes that are accompanied by underscore?

SUMMARY

As the scoring examples presented in this chapter have illustrated, film composers have employed one, another, or some combination of the eight **Scoring Devices** in scoring underwater-related films across each of the nine **Sea Genres**. While one example could primarily illustrate one device (Chorus), it could also incorporate one or more other devices (e.g., Chorus and Principal Instrument). Thus, a given scoring example (as classified in this chapter’s examples) may also include more than one scoring device. This should not come as a surprise since a composer, in scoring a film or a specific scene in the film, can look on the eight scoring devices as if it were a multidimensional palette of musical options available for the composer to draw upon in scoring a scene. The challenge for the composer is deciding which of the scoring devices on that palette he or she will use in composing a score for the scene in question. Let me explain.

We think of **time**, **space**, and **sound** as three-dimensional – **time** (past, present, and future), **space** (width, height, and depth), and **sound** (loudness, pitch, and timbre). However, a film score is multidimensional to the extent that its score (overall as well as for individual scenes) draws upon on a mix of the eight scoring devices—and perhaps also other devices not identified in this survey. Just as early geographers-cum-explorers attempted to map a newly-discovered land, their initial map was only a first and rough approximation and, at that, likely only a two-dimensional model of the spatial reality of the territory that the explorers had set out to map within the limits of their own expertise in using the mapping tools and techniques available at the time.

Similarly, this exploration of how composers have scored (composed music for) films having underwater-related plots and scenes has been a first attempt to construct a multidimensional map (model) to serve as a starting point for future explorers-cum-analysts to build “a better mousetrap” that would more fully capture (grasp) and better understand the multiple complexities at play when a composer creates a score to accompany and enhance a film’ underwater-related plots and scenes, which plots and scenes are in and of themselves necessarily complex and multidimensional given the plot, dialogue, cinematography, and moods (emotions) at play in each scene of a film.

The challenge of mapping in words the multidimensionality of a composer's score for a film is the near impossibility of the analyst's words adequately capturing and representing in a model (i.e., in words) the multidimensional richness of a film's score as heard by a film's viewer as he or she watches a film. What this writer has attempted to do has been to build a multidimensional model of the Scoring Devices composers have employed to score films having underwater-related plots and scenes. This initial charting or model of "The Sounds of Underwater Scoring" identified films and their scores across ten different Sea Genres presented in ten chapters ([DIVE I](#) through [DIVE 10](#)).

Each chapter reviewed scoring examples of films in a specific Sea Genre, drawing on score analyses by a variety of score reviewers (including in some cases analyses provided by this writer). Then, this chapter ([DIVE II](#)) focused on each Scoring Device, providing for each examples illustrating how composers applied each Device in films across nine Sea Genres (not including examples from Sea Docs as a tenth Sea Genre).

One way of modeling (and seeing) the score that one can hear while watching a film would be to replicate on paper the full set of sheet music (including all the parts for all the sections of the orchestra) for a given film's score—a great approach to modeling a score if one is able (which this writer is not) to read a film's score as presented on sheet music. An alternate approach would be for you as the reader to listen to a score at the same time one is reading an analysis of the score. This analysis has attempted, in this and previous chapters, to include this latter approach by providing hyperlinks to sources (YouTube videos) so the reader can in some instances watch a YouTube video that provides a visual example of a film scene along with an accompanying audio example of the composer's score for that scene. Alternatively, one could listen to the relevant underwater-related tracks from a film's soundtrack CD to hear the score that a composer provided for a specific scene in a film but this approach doesn't provide for the listener to simultaneously watch the scene.

Looking back, and doing a rough count of the scoring examples presented in this chapter, one hypothesis that emerges for our survey and model of how composers have approached scoring underwater-related films is that composers have used certain Scoring Devices more frequently than others, recognizing that a given score example might illustrate a composer having drawn on multiple Scoring Devices rather than just a single device, depending on the complexity (multidimensionality) of what the composer was trying to compose to complement or enhance a film's narrative, images, and dialogue as seen and heard by the viewer who is watching the film.

Based on the survey of scoring examples presented in the preceding chapters and summarized in this chapter, Table 1 (see below) presents a simple count of the number of examples identified for each of the eight Scoring Devices surveyed. The table is a shorthand device to provide a rough summary count of the frequency of use by film composers of each Scoring Device in each Sea Genre. The narrative that follows Table 1 provides commentary on each Scoring Device from the device most frequently used (**Leitmotif**) to the one least frequently used (**Principal Instrument**).

Table 1 – Frequency of Scoring Examples by SEA GENRE and SCORING DEVICE.

No. of Films Surveyed	SEA GENRE										Totals
	9	16	41	25	38		12	23	19	50	
	Sea Monsters	Sea Mutants	Sea Battles	Sea Buddies	Sea Subs		Sea Spies	Sea Treasures	Sea Escapes	Sea Docs (*)	
SCORING DEVICE					Fantasy Subs (20)	War Subs (18)					
Principal Instrument	2	2		2		2	1	2			11
Leitmotif	5	6	23	7	10	8	1	1	10		71
Sense of Depth or Pressure		1	1	1	2	3		3	2		13
Horizontal Movement	3	2	3	3	6	5	2	2	6		32
Vertical Movement	4	2	3	2	5	5	1	6	7		35
Orchestration	4	5	15	9	8	7	3	9	8		68
Sound Effects	2	5		8	3	8	3	4	9		42
Single Voice or Chorus	2		1	5	3	4	1	2	2		20
Totals	22	23	46	37	37	42	12	29	44		292

(*) For this exercise, score examples were not tabulated for the Sea Docs genre.

71 – LEITMOTIF – This device appears as the device most frequently used by composers in scoring music for films having an underwater-related plot motif. Using this device entails having different musical motifs for different aspects of a film (e.g., a human being, a sea creature, and/or the “underwater” environment itself). The examples provided for this device illustrate that composers have not limited its use to any specific Sea Genre; indeed, composers have used this device in their scores for nearly all Sea Genres (and likely also would be used in Sea Doc scores).

An academic treatise on film score analysis likely would identify leitmotif as perhaps the most classic scoring device—though at times its use risks bordering on what in the film scoring community is referred to as “mickey mousing” which has been defined as a scoring technique that syncs a score’s music with the actions on screen. Also worth noting is that while a distinction is made here between Leitmotif and Orchestration (see immediately below), many of the score examples identified to illustrate the Leitmotif device also could be used as examples of

Orchestration, this being the case because composers use Orchestration techniques to construct Leitmotif cues within the composer's overall score for a film.

68 – ORCHESTRATION – A composer (or his/her orchestrator/arranger) must necessarily orchestrate the score that he or she has written, that is, prepare the music sheets for the different sections of the orchestra to indicate which musicians/instruments will play which sections of a score during which moments of a film. Generally, a score for a film will not rely on a single musical instrument though some scores may feature a certain instrument as the primary musical instrument (see below), that instrument played solo or accompanied by other instruments. On the other hand, as evident in many if not most of the examples identified for this device, more likely than not a composer's score will call on multiple sections of an orchestra and selected instruments in those sections to play at varying times during a film. Indeed, for some of the examples provided for this device, the orchestration example may also illustrate other devices as listed here (e.g., leitmotif, movement, or sense of depth or pressure).

40 – SOUND EFFECTS (NATURAL AND OR ELECTRONIC-SYNTHESIZED) – Over time, with the invention of electronic instruments such as the Ondes Martinet, Theremin, and synthesizers as well as computer-assisted sound sampling, it has become easier for a composer writing a film score to incorporate different kinds of sound effects (musical, animal, human, or natural such as metallic) to underscore (complement or accentuate) the mood in a particular scene or the action appearing on the screen. In earlier years a recording of a natural sound (e.g., a whale or a dolphin) could be dubbed into a musical cue already recorded by a live orchestra; today a composer can easily dub synthesized sounds (e.g., stored in a computer) directly into the recording of a score while it is played by an orchestra, a synthesizer, or a combination of both.

35 – VERTICAL MOVEMENT – Given the three-dimensional nature of a body of water, be it a river, lake, or ocean, there is ample space within which underwater action can take place. Further, there are variable levels of visibility within that watery space, with visibility higher near the surface and the amount of light declining as one descends deeper below the surface; ultimately, there is little to no light (total darkness) near ocean's bottom. The examples identified for this device illustrate how composers have scored a film's scenes to complement or accentuate a human protagonist, a sea creature, or a vehicle (e.g., a submarine) moving vertically (descending or ascending) through the surrounding underwater environment.

32 – HORIZONTAL MOVEMENT – Interestingly, our tally of 32 examples of "horizontal movement" scoring in films roughly corresponds to just about the same number of examples identified for "vertical movement" scoring (35). Often it is said that a good score can improve a bad film if only by helping to move the film along. For a film's underwater scenes, a good score helps move along the action or narrative where protagonists (except for dolphins and torpedoes) do not move all that quickly. Of course, many sea creatures (e.g., sharks) can move through the water significantly faster than their prey (e.g., a human being).

Consider a classic above-water example—the scene in **The Ten Commandments** (1956) where the film’s composer, Elmer Bernstein, provided an upbeat cue that seemingly sped up the slow exodus of the Hebrews out of Egypt. Similarly, the “horizontal movement” examples identified in various Sea Genre films demonstrate the different ways in which composers’ scores have complemented or accentuated the pace of the action taking place underwater. In this regard, to appreciate how such scoring so often needs to be an integral part of a film, the next time you watch a film’s underwater scene involving horizontal or vertical movement of a human protagonist, a sea creature, or a submarine, compare how you feel watching the scene accompanied by the score compared with watching the same scene with the sound turned off. You immediately realize that, without the music, something’s missing and perhaps even to the point that action in the scene slows down.

20 – SINGLE VOICE OR CHORUS – As illustrated by the “single voice or chorus” examples presented for a variety of Sea Genre films, a composer often will incorporate the human voice (single voice or chorus) into a film’s score to convey a sense of something “otherworldly” or “grander” in the film than what one would experience in the absence of this device. Male chorus, for example, complements the action in **The Hunt for Red October**,” while female chorus adds an ethereal (and sense of awe) dimension to the score for **The Abyss**. In some cases, a single female, either a song with lyrics or a melody with wordless vocals, is just what is required to complement the onscreen action and the film’s narrative—and, absent that voice (or chorus), what one experiences in watching a film suffers greatly.

13 – SENSE OF DEPTH OR PRESSURE – When a human being dives underwater, he or she is suddenly out of his/her element. One cannot breathe underwater unless you are breathing oxygen from a SCUBA tank. Further, one cannot see as clearly, especially as light penetrates less and less as one descends deeper and deeper into an unknown darkness. The further one descends into the depths, the greater the pressure per square inch on one’s body. The score examples provided for the “sense of depth or pressure” device illustrate how composers have complemented or accentuated what a human protagonist experiences underwater as the surrounding body of water seemingly closes in, especially as the protagonist descends deeper.

11 – PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENT – Scores for films with an underwater-related plot tend to be accompanied by Orchestration (see above) and not depend on a single musical instrument. However, in a relatively small number of cases, the scores composed for films having an underwater-related plot rely heavily (if not solely) on a primary musical instrument, probably most often that instrument being a harp to evoke a mood or complement or accentuate a film’s underwater setting or the action taking place within that setting. Something about the sound of the harp being played, perhaps almost magically, makes it seem the perfect instrument to evoke in the viewer a sense of being underwater as one watches a film scene taking place underwater and hears its accompanying score featuring the harp as the sole or “primary musical instrument.”

CONCLUSION

One with more expertise and experience in music and film composition (scoring) than possessed by this writer would be much better equipped to deliver more indepth technical analysis of the film scores surveyed and reviewed in the preceding chapters, and would likely also bring greater expertise and precision to bear on identifying which Scoring Devices reviewed herein (and possibly others, for example, Melody) have been most effectively used by composers in scoring the films surveyed herein. This is an opportunity that more qualified analysts may wish to seize.

In the meantime, suffice it to say how much more enjoyable a film with an underwater-related plot and scenes is if the film has engaged just the right composer to deliver just the right score for the film. This led the present writer to ask what he deems to be the best film score in each of the ten **SEA GENRES** surveyed in this and the preceding chapters – and which of those “ten best” scores would merit being recognized as the best score (or at least this writer’s favorite score) for a film having an underwater-related plot and scenes.

Accordingly, our next chapter (**DIVE 12**) answers that question as we present our **SEA NOMINEES FOR BEST (FAVORITE) UNDERWATER SCORE**.

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