

THE ANNOTATED SCORE

A COMPANION PIECE TO:
THE MUSIC OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS FILMS
PART III: THE RETURN OF THE KING

PACKAGED WITH
THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS.

DISC ONE

1 – ROOTS AND BEGINNINGS

The Return of the King begins with an uncharacteristically gentle and bucolic tone. Oboe and strings introduce a purling waltz that soon sweeps a familiar melody to the fore. As it has twice before, the History of the Ring theme accompanies the on-screen title, and the final third of *The Lord of the Rings* begins.

But this is not the tumultuous Middle-earth of present day. This is Middle-earth centuries earlier, a land that has not known the burden of the One Ring for over two thousand years. Shore's music is bright—playful, even. Sprightly woodwinds dance around two small hobbits fishing upon the Gladden river. This is hobbit music, but of a different breed. The lilting waltz gives way to two-step phrases, more characteristic of hobbit music, and a chipper variant on the Hobbits Antics figure (introduced in *The Two Towers*) playfully builds until, with a twittering trill, it deposits one hobbit in the river's waters.

The music darkens for the first time, only to be parted by another of the hobbits' signature sounds, the solo fiddle. But the melody offers no playfulness, no buoyancy. Once again the History of the Ring sounds—the One Ring has lured another hand. Déagol pulls the Ring from the silt and scrambles up the riverbank to examine his find... and to find himself examined. [The Seduction of the Ring](#) sounds in the [boys chorus](#) as Déagol peels his fingers back, exposing the powerful ornament. Close behind, Sméagol, Déagol's fishing companion, spots the glinting Ring. If Déagol is intrigued, Sméagol is bewitched. The transfixing Seduction theme continues as Sméagol leans in close and demands, "Give us that, Déagol, my love."

UNUSED CONCEPT:

Both the music for Sméagol and Déagol's fight and the music for Sméagol's transformation into Gollum were not used in the film. Gollum's transformation music marks the lengthiest unused composition in *The Return of the King*.

Sméagol lurches towards the Ring, initiating a rhythmic stirring in the strings and low double reeds. Low brass chords now begin to gnaw at the texture as Déagol ducks away. The hobbits inexplicably cast their friendship aside as the two diminutive characters begin to wrestle tooth and nail for ownership of the Ring. Unrelenting, Sméagol's attack is met with a chilling musical counterpart—an intersection of the Seduction and Evil themes for the One Ring. This is to be an overriding trend in Howard Shore's score to *The Return of the King*. *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers* illustrated, through the hobbits' eyes, the ever-expanding scope of Middle-earth, and the limitless extent to which the One Ring had affected it. But here, as the story draws towards its conclusion, that scope, the breadth of storytelling, has come to singularly focus upon the plight of the One Ring. Shore's diverse thematic catalogue begins to fold inwards, combining material as it reaches a common terminus.

Behind Sméagol and Déagol's conjoined Seduction and Evil themes another line forms, crawling and scratching along the orchestra's bottom. The Descending Third figure is but one of many ancillary lines associated with Mordor, yet to hear it here, so far from its home, associated with two simple characters who were, only moments ago, fishing upon a cool blue river, is cruelly upsetting.

But the angular music of Mordor is appropriate to this setting. Under the Ring's overwhelming influence, Sméagol murders Déagol. Pinched settings of the History theme mark a new hand bearing the Ring. A spindly oboe line descends, trickling down through the orchestra as Sméagol flees for the Misty Mountains and begins to change. Time passes as the History theme reemerges, encountering a new rising and falling line outlining minor harmonies upon its return. As Sméagol twists and withers we hear the earliest incarnations of The Pity of Gollum.

2 – JOURNEY TO THE CROSS-ROADS

Back in the present day, Gollum leads Sam and Frodo on their voyage to Mordor. It is a wearying journey, but Frodo is restless, obsessed with the Ring he bears around his neck. As the trio camps on the outer borders of Osgiliath, Frodo furtively examines his precious Ring. Shore's score, still transitioning back to modern times with a rising French horn line that hints at Ring music, pulls aside as violins reach up to form a cool, still reading of the History of the Ring. Gollum's scuffling breaks Frodo from his trance, and the score discards the History theme, leaving in its place that which it has wrought—the music of long-suffering hobbits.



The remainder of this composition abounds in the sounds of the Shire, but raggedly deconstructed, reformed as pained reminders. The solo clarinet of the hobbits' Pensive Setting wanders through dense minor harmonies, while gathering strings allude to the edges of the Journey There, the Ring Quest theme heard in *Fellowship* when Sam and Frodo first ventured past the Shire's landscape.

UNUSED CONCEPT:

The transitional music at the beginning of this composition, like the Gollum music that precedes it, was left out of the film to allow stillness and sound effects to carry the dramatic weight.

3 – THE ROAD TO ISENGARD

The defeated strains of the clarinet return once again. Sam tells Frodo he's rationed their food to properly provide for the journey home. Frodo pauses, pondering the likelihood of a return trip. But the strains of the fully-formed Journey There remind us that the hobbits have not yet even reached their destination. With this slow-rising theme, the trio sets back to the road.

Elsewhere another troupe is likewise traversing Middle-earth. Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli, accompanied by a compliment of Rohan's finest riders, make their way through the woods as the score's first statement of the Fellowship theme sings out. As the camera tilts back and *The Return of the King* title card appears, the theme shifts and French horn intones the opening of the Realm of Gondor, the *de facto* central theme of the third film.

But Gondor will have to wait, for once again the score shifts, now overtaken by the puckish sounds of hobbits. Clarinet jumps to its high *tessitura* where it is met by *pizzicato* strings and the **tin whistle**. It can be none other than Merry and Pippin, discovered assembling a feast from the wreckage of Isengard. Yet for all the music's playfulness, it seems to be suggesting something more profound. Merry and Pippin's whimsical tones are infused with something sterner. In mixing thematic bits from the Shire and Fellowship themes, Shore suggests that these two hobbits are about to lend themselves to Middle-earth's needs in a significantly more meaningful way.

4 – THE FOOT OF ORTHANC

Isengard's debris houses more than a hobbit-worthy banquet. Enshrouded at Orthanc's summit, Saruman and Gríma Worm-tongue still lurk about. Saruman emerges to hurl taunts at Théoden and the Fellowship. The Isengard theme, which was once imbued with an overpowering militaristic weight, appears beneath string harmonics, now whisper-soft, but still in the darkest registers of the London Philharmonic's low woodwinds. A subtle pulsing in the strings adds a sense of urgency to the proceedings.

Saruman knows of the hobbits. His homeland is ruined, his minions defeated but, empowered by his servitude to Sauron, he is still strong. A static variation on the Threat of Mordor announces this cache of evil power from deep in the orchestra's throat. Saruman reveals his palantír to the crowd, maniacally grinning as aleatoric horns thicken the texture. With the conversation's power shifting to Saruman, brass again state the Isengard theme, now more robustly.

IN THE MAKING:

The middle portion of this composition, heard just after Saruman produces his palantír, does not appear in the final film.

Saruman knows, too, of Aragorn's right to Gondor's throne. Mocking him as a mere Ranger, French horns eviscerate the Gondor theme, swallowing it into their lowest, darkest possible register.

And Saruman knows of Rohan's weakened state and Théoden's personal doubts. Even after losing his staff to Gandalf, the evil wizard continues to predict the heroes' downfall. The orchestra reestablishes its dark pulsing as Théoden calls to Gríma, asking him to renounce his master and come down from Orthanc. Saruman belittles Wormtongue, knocking him to the ground. Incensed, Wormtongue produces a dagger from beneath his cloak. As he approaches Saruman, the orchestra convulses with a short statement of the Threat of Mordor in the lowest possible range—as if Mordor, foreseeing Gríma's next step, were suddenly recalling all power issued to Saruman on loan. Wormtongue plunges his blade through Saruman's back. The wizard's last air departs his body. With a clacking tumble of aleatoric brass and strings, Saruman falls from Orthanc and is impaled on a spiked wheel at the base of the tower, a victim of his own metal and wheels.

5 – RETURN TO EDORAS

With a deepening series of minor chords beneath dissonant high strings, Saruman's spiked wheel turns, sinking his body into the flood waters, and causing his palantír to fall from his robe. Pippin spots the vile orb glowing beneath the murky waters and hurries over to retrieve it. Gandalf quickly confiscates the object, but Pippin is intrigued. The camera pushes in on his widening eyes as the orchestra condenses to an obsessively enveloping D-natural.

The mode shifts to A minor and the rasp of the Hardanger fiddle sings the score's first statement of the Rohan Fanfare. The story returns to Edoras, the capital of Rohan. The Rohirrim are honoring the bravery displayed at Helm's Deep, and remembering their fallen comrades. Shore sets the Rohan theme in an elegant six beats per measure, lending it both a heroic lilt and a songful, elegiac quality.

6 – THE CHALICE PASSED



Éowyn presents Aragorn with a drink, honoring him for his service to her people, and indicating her own feeling towards him. While Aragorn remains silent, Shore's music presents the longing Éowyn and Aragorn theme, the melody associated with her unrequited love. Though Éowyn's expression indicates that she believes Aragorn shares her romantic inclinations, the music informs us otherwise. Just as Théoden steps in, the incomplete Éowyn and Aragorn theme shifts ever so slightly, introducing English horn and a slightly different contour, becoming Éowyn and Théoden. Reading her face, Théoden congratulates Éowyn on what he assumes is a shared love.

Other corners of Meduseld, however, are experiencing far more light-hearted celebrations. Gimli and Legolas have agreed to compete against one another in a drinking contest. While Legolas is distantly intrigued, Gimli's interest borders on obsession. He is ready to take on the Elf on a contest he is certain to win. The music returns to Dwarf style for the last time in *The Lord of the Rings*. As Gimli ravenously gulps his ale, Shore's score bounces with excitement, the Dwarves' open fifth intervals rebuilt into something resembling the Hobbits' End Cap: the Dwarf End Cap. Constant modulation and a warbling *cor anglais* line place the Dwarf on unsteady footing as it quickly becomes clear that, despite his abiding love for drink, Gimli's constitution is no match for an Elf's. With a final dizzying trill, Gimli's head meets the floor of the Golden Hall at an uncomfortably high velocity.

7 – THE GREEN DRAGON

Featuring Billy Boyd and Dominic Monaghan

Collaboratively penned by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and the members of Plan 9, “[The Green Dragon](#)” is Merry and Pippin’s ode to their favorite Bywater pub. And though it’s a moment of pure celebratory joyousness, the song contains a dark moment. Pippin pauses mid-song, distracted, as if lost in his memories of the palantír.

This song features fiddle accompaniment by Dermot Crehan, who performed all the prominent fiddle work in *The Lord of the Rings*.

8 – GOLLUM’S VILLAINY

As Frodo and Sam sleep *en route* to the Cross-roads, Gollum and Sméagol hold their final internal dialogue. Shore’s Menace theme begins this composition, though it’s soon intercepted by the opening triplets of the Pity of Gollum. Sméagol’s transformation into Gollum illustrated the pity of the creature’s servile devotion to the One Ring. *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers* presented that needy creature in all his sadness. This was the Gollum represented by Shore’s Pity theme. By *The Return of the King*, Gollum has made a choice. He has put aside the neediness, the vestigial traits of Sméagol, and has decided to kill Frodo and Sam in order to retrieve his precious Ring. Shore’s Pity theme appears very little in this score, though its broiling, seething relative will dominate a later sequence. The [cimbalom](#)-based Menace of Gollum overtakes the creature’s musical representation, vellicating with deadly intent. As Sméagol enthusiastically agrees to follow through with Gollum’s plan to deliver the hobbits to “her” the Pity theme all but hands the reigns of this ravaged creature over to Menace.



Sam overhears this conversation, and attacks Gollum, branding him a murderer. Pinched brass over trilling winds and strings and rumbling percussion recall Sam and Gollum’s first violent encounter in *The Two Towers*. Angry brass chords accompany the accusations Sam spits at Gollum, but Frodo won’t hear them. Gollum turns the tables, accusing Sam of having a vendetta against him.

Frodo steadies Sam. A tender string passage begins as Frodo reminds Sam that they need Gollum’s guidance. Harp *arpeggios* over emotive triads play to the emotional weight that both Frodo and Sam are carrying, and the rift it threatens to tear in their friendship. With a final dissonant suspension Gollum retakes the lead, shooting a sneering half-smile back at Sam.

9 – ÉOWYN’S DREAM

The celebration at Edoras has subsided. Most of the revelers having long since bedded down, Aragorn wanders alone, pausing to stoke the dying fire in the Golden Hall. Nearby, Éowyn stirs, waking from a dream. As she tells Aragorn of her dream, in which she saw herself alone, thrust into an utterly dark abyss, a lush setting of the Éowyn and Aragorn theme plays. Aragorn comforts her, telling her to return to sleep, and the second phrase, the section of the theme that was cut short during the party, finally completes the melody.

Éowyn clutches Aragorn’s hand, and falls back to sleep.

10 – THE PALANTÍR

Pippin too, it seems, is now awake. In his eyes is the same haunted look as before. Restlessly he pulls back his bedding and begins to walk towards the sleeping Gandalf. In two-part harmony, strings coupled with flute play the score’s first strains of Evil Times, with a slightly stretched contour, intimating that Pippin is not entirely himself. The writing becomes increasingly chromatic until Pippin’s goal becomes clear—he wants another look at the palantír. As Pippin pulls the orb from Gandalf’s hand, a new Ring theme coupling begins. In a streamlined four-note phrase Shore introduces a line that lies somewhere between the Ring’s Evil and

History themes, yet at the same time suggests the shape of Evil Times. Does the theme suggest that the Ring's yet-unwritten history will inevitably bring it to evil purpose? Is it simply a musical warning, highlighting the imperative nature of the heroes' quest? A threat lobbed from Mordor?

But there's no time for such considerations. Pippin's vision in the palantír overwhelms his senses, and exposes him to the Enemy. The orchestra lurches, igniting into a blaze of furious string and wind textures over hammering timpani attacks. Bisecting the musical madness, the Descending Third figure marches out of Sauron's mind. The Evil of the Ring plays out in its traditional guise, creating a semi-canon by allowing the rhaita to enter just after the orchestral winds. Snare drum and tam-tam make four sweeping rolls, the last preceded by a long, glassy *tremolo portamento* in the violins.

Pippin is free of the vision and the palantír is again covered. But what of the aftermath? Gandalf shakes Pippin, waking him, and demands to know what he has seen. A haze of low and high clusters shroud Pippin's vision in mystery, but one line rises horrifyingly to the surface. The History/Evil hybrid, now in a more developed six-note guise, again plays as Pippin describes his vision of the White Tree of Gondor engulfed in flame.

Gandalf confers with Théoden and Aragorn, tells them of Pippin's vision, and explains that they now know that Sauron will strike Minas Tirith. Aragorn offers to journey to Minas Tirith, but Gandalf refuses the offer. Beginning with a pedal C, the Gondor theme descends ominously through the orchestra creating a collective pyramid cluster. Its conclusion is intercepted by an eerie brume of high strings, introducing, in miniature, the music of the Army of the Dead. Gandalf tells Aragorn that he must come to Minas Tirith by another road. "Follow the river. Look to the black ships."

11 – FLIGHT FROM EDORAS

Gandalf himself will ride to Minas Tirith to issue the warning. At his side will be Pippin, now deemed too mischievous to be left unsupervised. Shore's music picks up a bright clip as the wizard ushers his new companion towards Edoras' stables. But Pippin doesn't understand, so it falls to Merry to explain to him what's happening. Once again, strings and clarinet apply the Fellowship theme to the two hobbit friends; they've taken their next step towards responsibility. As Merry presents Pippin a packet of Longbottom Leaf for the trip, solo clarinet swerves back towards the stepwise motion of the Shire theme while the strings reiterate the Fellowship material. Pippin is afraid, but Merry can offer him no more than this creature comfort. He doesn't know what is going to happen.

Shadowfax launches out of the stables and, with a propulsive compound-meter setting of Gandalf the White (in the Fellowship), wizard and hobbit are off. Merry races up a lookout tower to watch his friend depart. As he speaks with Aragorn the Fellowship theme plays again. Merry worries about his friend's ability to take care of himself, but he seems to understand that what must be must be.

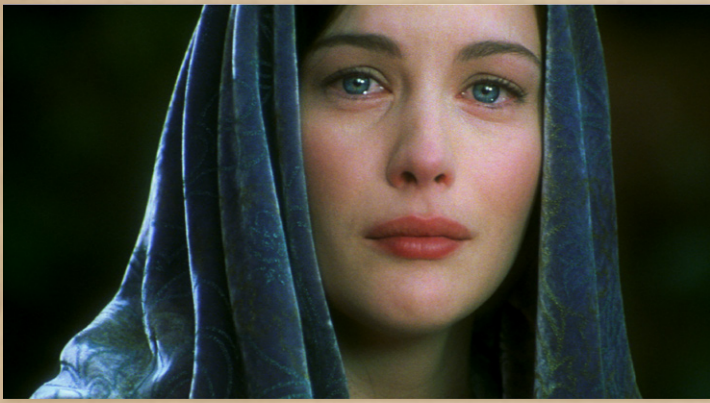
12 – THE GRACE OF UNDÓMIEL

Featuring Renée Fleming

The procession of the Elves of Rivendell winds its way through the forests as the former caretakers of Middle-earth travel to the Grey Havens. Reluctantly, Arwen Undómiel has joined her kin. But on her journey the noble woman of the Elves experiences a vision—a potential future spelled out before her eyes. Though she was led to imagine her future on Middle-earth as fraught with death and isolation, she learns that that same future was to hold a son, Eldarion, for her and Aragorn. The beautiful voice of Renée Fleming introduces Shore's new maturation of the [Evenstar theme](#), the melody that once spoke to the gulf between the two lovers now come to represent the distance between disparate futures.

IN THE MAKING:

A small internal portion of this composition, intended to play over the beginning of Pippin's vision, did not appear in the final film. Instead, sound effects were used for the disturbing vision.



Fleming's appearance in *The Return of the King* is indicative of the subtly modulating vocal sound of Middle-earth. The music of *The Fellowship of the Ring* embraced the pure, almost folk-like tones of vocalists such as [Enya](#) and [Isabel Fraser](#). The palette in *The Two Towers* became more varied and exotic. Vocal performances from [Emilana Torrini](#), [Sheila Chandra](#) and [Isabel Bayrakdar-ian](#) underscored the emphasis on Northern European, Eastern Asian and Eastern European tones. *The Return of the King* represents the peak of this progression—*The Lord of the Rings'* vocal music at its most developed and resplendent. Renée Fleming's voice is that of a *coloratura soprano*, one of the most revered and complex tones in

music. Says Shore, "She has such an amazing voice, but I couldn't have used her in *Fellowship*. I couldn't start there—I had to get there as the story became more complex."

Arwen, stunned by her vision, turns Asfaloth back towards Rivendell, back towards her father. Strings absorb the Evenstar melody, weaving beneath it the Rivendell *Arpeggios*. Arwen accuses her father of denying her the full truth. Elrond concedes, "Nothing is certain." Tender woodwinds elaborate the end of Evenstar as Arwen begs Elrond to help mankind in the only way he can. The orchestra again stirs with the Rivendell *Arpeggios*. Elrond turns away and Arwen collapses. He comes to her, only to find her hands cold, her Elvish immortality having been surrendered. Fleming's voice returns with an even gentler, more sober reading of Evenstar as Elrond is shocked, but moved. His daughter's gesture can only be honored if he is to act.

The Rivendell theme begins in earnest, swelling and rolling as in the theme's prime. The shards of Narsil are brought before Elvish metalsmiths. They will be reforged and returned to the World of Men. Shore's Minas Tirith theme is rhythmically compressed, as if it too is born anew and yet to stretch its limbs.

But the Fellowship is still to reach Minas Tirith, though Gandalf and Pippin are charging towards it. An excitedly muscular Fellowship theme presses the duo across Middle-earth until, via Shadowfax's swift footfall, they cross into Gondor. Horns and strings immediately announce their arrival with a proud summoning of the Realm of Gondor theme. And yet their first view of Minas Tirith is met by an odd inversion of the Gondor theme. All is not well in the White Tower and Gandalf knows it. Over the rails of rhythmic string patterns, brass charges forth with a canonic examination of the Gondor theme, and Gandalf and Pippin ascend the great burgh. As Shadowfax's hooves meet the city's stones the Realm of Gondor theme again crystallizes, clarified into a march-like rigor. But the theme ends differently than it has in the past, rising, after its opening, with down-and-back-up three-note figures. The Fellowship has finally brought Gondor's aid: a worthy interim leader. Gandalf the White's arrival temporarily shifts Gondor in Decline to Gondor in Ascension. The same down-and-back shape that opens the Fellowship theme, and forms the basis of the Heroics of Aragorn and Gandalf the White (in the Fellowship) now closes Gondor's theme. Gondor has suddenly – if momentarily – remembered its place as the seat of justice and decency in Middle-earth.

Gandalf's arrival at the top of Minas Tirith earns the climax of Shore's *crescendo*, a rich A-major chord sounding in all ranges of the orchestra. But this opulence is short-lived. At the summit, Gandalf and Pippin find a wilted tree, the same tree from Pippin's palantír vision. As Gandalf explains the significance of the White Tree of Gondor, Shore returns to a mournful, recollective setting of the Minas Tirith theme, now all the sadder compared to the rousing version heard back in Rivendell. Gondor, whatever its potential, is as weak as the steward who currently oversees the throne. Like distant war, drums rumble under a thin string cluster, and Gandalf and Pippin head into the throne room to meet with Denethor, the Steward of Gondor.

13 – THE EYES OF THE WHITE TOWER

Denethor receives Gandalf and Pippin, but upon their arrival he is heavily distracted, lost in thought. The Steward's heart is as broken as the cloven horn settled in his lap, for this horn belonged to Boromir, his eldest son. Flashing back through Pippin's memory, we see Boromir back at Amon Hen, pierced by the Orcs' black arrows. After a brief introductory passage, Shore's score returns to that long-ago tragedy with the same heart-wrenching boys chorus that depicted it in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. [A Noble End](#), Shore's music for mankind's sacrifice, makes its second appearance in *The Lord of the Rings*, but it is not to be its last.

Pippin tells Denethor of Boromir's sacrifice, and swears his allegiance, if somewhat naïvely. Gandalf brushes the hobbit aside, telling Denethor that this is not the time for mourning. He demands that Gondor begin preparing for the assault that will soon be upon it. The sonorous music of Denethor's grief begins to give way to the acrid music of his fury. Dissonant clusters form in the high strings, their entrances becoming increasingly staggered until, with a jagged assault of down-bowing strings, Denethor rises from Gondor's throne, accusing Gandalf of seeking to supplant him with Aragorn. "The rule of Gondor is mine and no other's."

With a surge from timpani and suspended cymbal, Gandalf turns his back on Denethor and exits the throne room. Low brass accents mark their footsteps with another quasi-inversion of the Gondor theme. They return to the courtyard, overlooking the White Tree, Gandalf disgusted with Denethor. "All has turned to vain ambition," he decries, and yet he regards Gondor's once-prominent nobility reverently. The sight of the White Tree is heralded by a clear trumpet solo, perhaps unable to yet muster a Gondorian theme, but at least willing to turn the melodic contour upwards once again.

Soon the Minas Tirith theme is able to find its way back into the mix, French horns carrying the melody in their singing register, cello and basses entering on the consequent phrase and continuing the line with a somber heft. Solo trumpet returns, now able to recall the theme, painting the final phrase with its clear-headed heraldry. The theme begins again, but is intercepted by the wider scope of the Realm of Gondor theme. But are we now seeing Gondor in Ascension or in Decline? Before the issue can be resolved, the music turns once more, clouding over, darkening. Mordor's bleak catalogue of material corrupts the palette. In the depths of the orchestra Shore introduces another hybrid theme, a martial line somewhere between an inverted Threat of Mordor and the Mordor Skip Beat. Concurrent to the Ring, Mordor's power is focusing, its peak nigh. Underlining this parallel, Shore reaches over the new Threat theme and deposits his inky History/Evil hybrid, this time emphasizing the Evil. Gandalf explains to Pippin just how Gondor came into such corruption and decay. High atop the city, the two spot the fires of Mordor on the horizon and a ponderous black cloud seeping across the sky towards them. "Help must come to us."

14 – A CORONAL OF SILVER AND GOLD

Finally reaching the Cross-roads, Frodo and Sam pause. Supported by the Pensive Setting of the Shire theme, Sam reassures Frodo, telling him that they will make it both to Mordor and then back home. Frodo seems unconvinced, but continues forward as the Fellowship theme honors the hobbits' resolve.

Down the path a little, the troupe encounters a statue, once erected by the men of Gondor to honor their king. The monument is now defaced, however, decapitated and marred with blood-red Orc scrawl. Half buried in the forest's detritus, the head now wears a crown of wild flowers, its stone eyes ever looking towards the darkening sky. But in a fleeting moment, Sauron's fume of smoke parts, and a single beam of light strikes the statue's fallen head, illuminating it. Here Shore introduces a proposed theme, the first in his collection dedicated to the upcoming Fourth Age of Middle-earth. Gondor Reborn brightens the orchestra with a glistening line beaming high in the ensemble that at once resembles the Minas Tirith theme and is yet unlike anything we've heard before. The melody dissipates as quickly as the sky shrouds over again, but in it lies the promise of a new tomorrow for Middle-earth.

Gollum, acting in servile mode once again, urges the hobbits not to dawdle among such observations. Subtle hints of the Pity theme's opening triplets lope beside him, likewise playing the Sméagol role without genuine commitment.

Back in Gondor, Gandalf and Pippin once again ponder the growing fires glaring at them from the east. Sunless melodies for low strings and rolling timpani grumble through the orchestra, though an isolated moment of sprightly hobbit-esque clari-

UNUSED CONCEPT:

Due to reediting, neither the music for Gandalf and Pippin's balcony conversation nor select passages at Minas Morgul were realized in the final film.

net and flute writing colors a hopeful mention of Frodo and Sam. But Gandalf tells Pippin of the coming of the Witch-king of Angmar, and the orchestra sinks back to its sonic depths, the six-note Evil/History of the Ring hybrid sounding in the brass.

Scrambling up rock, Gollum leads the hobbits to the entrance of Minas Morgul. Frodo staggers towards the front gate, entranced, his mind overwhelmed by the Ring. Sam and Gollum pull him back, but something is amiss. Minas Morgul shakes, violins begin to divide into eight-part clusters, chorus and brass clotting beneath them, their own massive textures thickening the palette. An ensemble-wide *crescendo* begins as the orchestra and **chorus**' ground lifts upwards, spiking into the sky. Minas Morgul sends up a beacon of coiling green light, and from the pits below rises the Witch-king, mounted on the leathery back of his winged beast. The Descending Third motif tramps through the score, bracketed beneath a muted brass and rhaita statement of the Evil of the Ring theme in its classic setting bedecked in exotic harmonies. Low strings begin to anchor the music, odd asymmetrical accents slowly resurrecting an old ally—the Five Beat Pattern. But the refugees of Isengard no longer have its theme to drive them. Shore, instead, offers this composition's second potential Fourth Age theme, the Witch King/the Orcs of Mordor. Climbing in an unchecked bid for supremacy, this new theme combines the inverted Threat of Mordor motif with rhythmic suggestions of the old Isengard theme. As before, Mordor is summoning its power, moving to crush mankind once and for all.

While the Orcs begin their march to Gondor, Frodo, Sam and Gollum begin to climb the secret staircase along the Morgul Vale. The One Ring slips by Sauron's forces undetected, marked only by Shore's Ring Quest Theme, Dangerous Passes, the same theme that played as the Fellowship began to traverse the steep inclines of Caradhras.

UNUSED CONCEPT:

The scene with which Dangerous Passes was aligned was eventually edited out, meaning that Dangerous Passes never actually appears in the film.

15 – THE LIGHTING OF THE BEACONS

Sam and Gollum separate from Frodo for a minute, falling behind his pace on the winding stairs. Gollum encourages the hobbits, and the orchestra breaths in and out in musical sighs. The composition begins with A minor and F minor harmonies, the opening harmonies of the Pity of Gollum, but the theme does not materialize. Even in subservient mode, Gollum is wittingly leading the hobbits to their death. The harmonies complicate as Sam pushes Gollum's back to the rocks. If he has any reason to suspect Gollum's treachery, any reason at all, Sam will not hesitate to finish him. Gollum's rotted teeth protrude past his curled lips, sneering at Sam's threat, emboldened by the *cor anglais*' four-note Evil/History/Evil Times hybrid motif.

IN THE MAKING:

This composition was written to the film's original edit, which featured several sequences in a different order. Originally, the start of Pippin's quest to light the beacon was immediately followed by Denethor and Faramir's first encounter. Eventually, the Denethor and Faramir scene was moved to well after the beacon lighting sequence.

In the streets of Minas Tirith, another hobbit is about to begin a perilous climb. Gandalf, having seen Minas Morgul's signal, has sent Pippin on a mission. He is to light the city's beacon and summon Rohan's aid. Throughout the beacon lighting sequence, Shore strikes up a churning rhythmic patter, which constantly refers to a four-note motif consisting of an *arpeggiated* triad (either major or minor) and a flat sixth, a half-step above the triad. In fact, this figure is woven through numerous themes in *The Lord of the Rings*. It represents Tolkien's recurrent theme of a fall from grace and a subsequent redemption. In this sequence, its purpose is crystallized. Gondor's star in Middle-earth has fallen, sunk under the weight of its own decadent history. But it still embodies the greatest hope among Middle-earth's assets. With a swell of brass, Pippin dashes down Minas Tirith's streets, off to fulfill his mission.

Atop the city, ensconced in the throne room, Denethor berates Faramir, his youngest son. The One Ring was within his grasp, and yet he sent it away with the hobbits. The steward is outraged. He claims he desires the Ring for no other reason than to keep it from the Enemy; he'd only have used it "...at the uttermost end of need." His eyes stare deeply, the Evil/History theme revealing that his mind, too, is already bent on the Ring. For a moment he hallucinates, seeing Boromir approaching him. A tragic ebb of strings dissolves along with Boromir's image. Denethor tells Faramir to leave.

Outside, Pippin continues his climb. The four-note Weakness and Redemption figure spins through continual variations, darting through accompaniment and melodic lines alike. The hobbit has reached the peak of Amon Dîn and the first beacon fire. He stumbles at first, but manages to light the beacon. The orchestra tautens, and one of *The Lord of the Rings'* signature musical moments begins. Machine-like, woodwinds and strings churn, beginning the machinations of Gondor's salvation. Weakness and Redemption braces the low brass, underpinning constantly modulating chords in the French horns and trumpets. With a lattice of rising figures, the brass steels upwards, emerging in a powerful, magniloquent statement of the Gondor theme. Yet, the phrases still end with the Gondor in Decline figure. This is Gondor both summoning its pride and calling for help.

The message is carried across Middle-earth, one beacon at a time joining the relay. Finally it reaches Rohan. Aragorn is the first to see it, and with a giddy series of Weakness and Redemption lines, he bursts into Meduseld to inform King Théoden.

Théoden hears the news and pauses in thought. Should he provide aid to Gondor, which so recently failed to send help to Rohan? A *sforzando tremolo* string chord awaits his word. Théoden, unlike Denethor, understands what must be done—he will muster the Rohirrim and ride to Minas Tirith. The Rohan Fanfare erupts in the brass over martial percussion and strings.

Aside tender string and horn writing, Aragorn and Éowyn share a few parting words, during which he discovers a sword hidden beneath her horse's saddle. She may have more in mind than simply offering the men a farewell.

Merry seeks out Théoden amidst the din. He offers his sword to the service of Rohan. Pippin may have unwittingly enlisted himself in Gondor's defense, but Merry understands what he's asking. Solo piccolo intones the stepwise motion of the Shire theme, but supported by the more worldly harmonies of the Fellowship theme. Théoden accepts the gracious offer, dubbing him Meriadoc, esquire of Rohan.

The Rohirrim begin to ride, but it is not the Rohan Fanfare that carries them. Middle-earth's cavalry sets out to battle Sauron's industry to the tones of Nature's Reclamation, as if Nature itself has now accepted the Horse-lords as allies. The theme begins a steady build, rising unfettered through the orchestra's registers. With a final twirl of the Rohan Fanfare, Théoden's troops are on their way.

IN THE MAKING:

The original version of the beacon music can be heard on *The Return of the King's* 2003 Original Motion Picture Soundtrack CD, and features a different harmonization of the Gondor theme—notably stressing major modes. The composition was reharmonized in the finished film to increase the dramatic tension and underscore Gondor's dire situation. Heard here is the film version.

The OST performance, incidentally, was the first music recorded for *The Return of the King*. It was the London Philharmonic's first take on the first day of the sessions.

UNUSED CONCEPT:

The final statement of the Rohan Fanfare, which ends Disc One, was not used in the film.

Disc Two

1 – OSGILIATH INVADED

Featuring Ben del Maestro



Faramir and his troops patrol Osgiliath's borders by night. He and Madril, his second in command, confer while a placid but alert setting of the Gondor theme rests between high strings and treading percussion. Unbeknownst to them, a legion of Orcs approaches silently by boats. The inverted Threat of Mordor stealthily leads the way, the theme now absorbing the exotic stretched harmonies of Mordor. A Gondorian scout spies the approaching troop, and a quickened Way to Mordor variation kicks in as he is shot with an arrow. The men are alerted to the Orcs. The Way to Mordor continues as the men move into position, hoping to cut off the Orcs' ambush. The Orcs flood the empty streets until, lead by

Faramir, the Gondorian soldiers begin their attack. The Realm of Gondor announces the offensive, but is immediately met by the Cruelty of the Orcs, the chromatically descending pyramid that represents their base desire for carnage.

After a charge of the Fellowship theme the battle rages on, variants of the powerful Mordor Outline now joining the fray, attacking the flowing Gondor theme from below. The men are overwhelmed. Madril advises Faramir, "We can't hold them. The city is lost." Mixed chorus enters singing "[The Retreat from Osgiliath](#)" as Faramir calls for a retreat, but before the men are informed, situations worsen—the Nazgûl have arrived. Brass intones the Nazgûl's signature close-spaced harmonies, though the Black Riders' theme does not appear in full.

Faramir screams for retreat, and the men begin wildly pouring out of the city. Madril is struck and falls to the ground. He is approached by a group of Orcs, led by Gothmog, Sauron's general. The orchestra quivers with the same minor stepwise motion that began the Orcs' assault on the Fellowship far back in Moria. Madril cannot move. Gothmog thrusts a spear through him, and a high string chord escapes with Madril's final breath. The Orc growls, "The age of Men is over. The time of the Orc has come." The tempo drops and Shore's inverted Threat of Mordor sounds again, more weightily and declamatory.

Outside the city the scattered garrison is being assaulted from above as the Nazgûl swoop in for their precision kills. The pulse quickens and brass again adopts the Ringwraiths' harmonies. Mordor's bilious cloud stretches its edge over Osgiliath to veil the retreat in darkness.

But a familiar theme intercedes. Gandalf rides out to meet the Wraith's, a pure beam of white light emanating from his staff hewing the darkness, and Gandalf the White (in the Fellowship) sings out in high strings above the orchestral tumult. Boy soprano [Ben del Maestro](#) sings "[The White Rider](#)," as Gandalf turns the Nazgûl away, and provides the men safe passage back to Minas Tirith.

IN THE MAKING:

Listeners will note that "Osgiliath Invaded" contains several references to the Fellowship theme, and shares a number of passages with "The Grace of Undómiel." Originally this invasion sequence was to be concurrent to Gandalf and Pippin's first arrival at Minas Tirith. The Osgiliath battle was meant to play unbroken (save for a few updates on Gandalf's progress) and was to be placed before the lighting of the beacons.

2 – THE STAIRS OF CIRITH UNGOL

Faramir returns to Minas Tirith to confer with Gandalf. Pippin sits on Shadowfax along with Gandalf, and catches Faramir's eye. He has only days before seen two other halflings: Frodo and Sam. Solo clarinet begins a Shire-like line as Pippin's eyes widen. His friends are still alive.

Alive, yes, but in great peril. Led by Gollum, the two hobbits climb the stairs of Cirith Ungol. Frodo struggles to maneuver the rocks and pitches forward, revealing the Ring around his neck. Gollum sees it, his gaze transfixed. The orchestra twitches in aleatoric discomfort as Gollum reaches towards Frodo. The History of the Ring plays out clearly, tempting Gollum's hand, inviting it. But, sword at the ready, Sam calls to Gollum, who instead grabs Frodo's arm and helps him up the incline. While Sam follows the same difficult pathway, Gollum pulls Frodo aside, sowing the seeds of mistrust. "He wants it," Gollum claims. "He needs it." Again the orchestra is electrified, twittering in a thousand directions at once after the *cor* repeats the History theme. Has Sam, too, heard the Ring's call?

Far off, the Ring's slaves continue to do its bidding. The Witch-king looks out over the conquered city of Osgiliath toward Minas Tirith. Over a contrabassoon pedal and string chords, the Black Captain orders Gothmog to lead the troops towards the city. "Do not stop the attack until the city is taken."

IN THE MAKING:

The *cor anglais* reading of the History of the Ring was not used in the final film, only the aleatoric string writing that backs it was.

The very end of this composition, which was meant to score the Witch-king and Gothmog, was pushed forward and used under Gandalf and the Gondorian troops in the final film.

3 – ALLEGIANCE TO DENETHOR

UNUSED CONCEPT:

Due to editing, neither the music for Pippin's vows nor the transitional brass fanfare at the end of this composition were used in the film.

Clarinet and strings warm the first conversation between Pippin and Faramir—though the friendly atmosphere chills and darkens as Faramir remembers Boromir, and his similarities to Denethor. Moments later, Pippin, bound by his unplanned oath, finds himself uncomfortably swearing fealty to Faramir's father. But it is less a proud moment for Pippin than one of hesitation. Strings pick up motion, then halt. Melodic ideas begin, but cease. Eventually the orchestra sinks to heavy low string chords spotted with harp, as Denethor turns his attention to Faramir. Fully aware of the sacrifice he is demanding, Denethor orders Faramir to retake Osgiliath.

IN THE MAKING:

In the film Sam and Frodo's fight (see Disc Two, Track Five, "The Parting of Sam and Frodo") separates the scene between Faramir and Denethor and Faramir's march to war. They were originally intended to play as they do here, uninterrupted, connected by the pan flute solos.

Faramir finally asks the question that gnaws at his mind, "You wish now that our places had been exchanged, that I had died and Boromir lived." Denethor answers, "Yes. I wish that." Pan flute, performed by [Ulrich Herkenhoff](#), initiates a sad melody that seems to seek the Gondor theme's Ascension ending, but can never grasp it. But, at the same time, the Faramir and Denethor theme carries the upsetting reverberations of Mordor's bid at a Fourth Age theme, The Witch King/The Orcs of Mordor. Will Denethor's failures as a father and a leader cause Gondor's downfall while seeking its victory? Is he paving the way for Mordor's victory?

4 – THE SACRIFICE OF FARAMIR

Featuring Billy Boyd performing "The Edge of Night"

A funeral march sets an airy line for strings, woodwinds and chorus (singing "[The Last Son](#)") over a strum of percussion as Faramir and his troops begin their march out of Minas Tirith in their futile attempt to reclaim Osgiliath. The pan flute returns, again vainly sorting through scraps of Gondor's theme, trying to reform it. As percussion continues its stride, the harmonic momentum of the strings and chorus subside, each chord freezing, drawing itself reluctantly forwards. Again the pan flute strains to

bolster Gondor's pride, but illustrates little other than the grave of a once proud kingdom—a lineage come to its bitter end. Gandalf pleads with Faramir, but, shamed by his father, Faramir feels he must obey his orders. Horns pick up the Realm of Gondor in Decline, while a low string counterline and the martial percussion keep up the pace.



Minas Tirith's gates part, and the troops move towards Osgiliath, their horses quickening their steps. The score increases its tempo slightly, tightening its fateful noose. Now in the Orcs' sight, the steeds begin to gallop as Orkish archers draw back the black, feathery fletching of their arrows.

But no choral requiem follows. No grand orchestral eloquence speaks. Only the unaccompanied voice of a hobbit marks this tragedy. As Pippin, Billy Boyd sings "[The Edge of Night](#)," a mournful reflection on the distances, both geographical and emotional, war asks its participants to travel. Gently, the orchestra enters, building tearing dissonances behind Pippin's simple hobbit tune.

Shore's chromatic cluster builds, overwhelming the song with its murky cloud. The Orcs release their first volley of arrows, and the orchestra suddenly cuts off, abandoning Pippin to finish his final syllable alone. The hobbits' clarinet enters and reiterates the opening pitches of Pippin's song—the same perfect fifth that begins Gondor's theme—in a mournful echo. Solo fiddle answers the clarinet, likewise lonely and unembellished.

5 – THE PARTING OF SAM AND FRODO

The agitated quiver of Gollum's Menace traipses across the cymbalom's stings as the Ring's former owner tosses the hobbits' remaining lembas bread over the mountain's edge, framing Sam as an unchecked glutton. The hobbits awake to find the last of their food gone. Sam accuses Gollum of having taken the bread, and the orchestra begins the same static build of Mordor's Skip Beat that quaked behind *Fellowship's* Prologue. Though the Battle of Dagorlad may have involved thousands, make no mistake: the drama of three diminutive creatures wandering the western mountains of Mordor is every bit the War of the Ring. The stakes are no less.

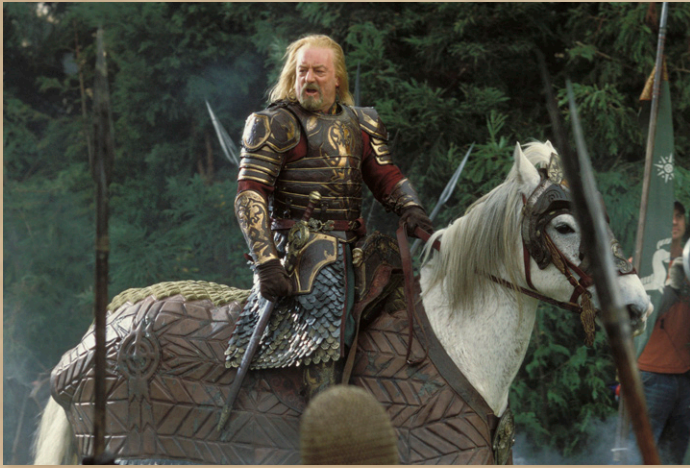
Gollum tells his lie, revealing that Sam's cloak is littered with crumbs. With a brassy turn, the Evil of the Ring (the will of which Gollum has just acted upon) sounds in a four-note reduction. "He took it! He took it!" Sam throws Gollum to the ground, beating him until, with a slice of violins, Frodo pulls him off. As the figure fades, its intent clarifies... we've just heard a sharply warped reading of the Pity of Gollum. Frodo has again saved the despicable wretch. Exhausted by the effort, he collapses. Sam offers to help his friend. He knows the Ring is a terrible burden. Innocently, he offers to carry it for Frodo. But in Frodo's ears, Sam's words recall Gollum's. "He wants it!" Two elongated violin pitches evoke the shape of the History Theme, but the theme doesn't materialize. They're the wrong pitches, and yet Frodo would seem to have heard the theme in his head, his perception bruised by paranoia. He thinks Sam wants his precious Ring. Wrongfully suspicious, his mind corroded by the Ring's influence, Frodo tells Sam to leave him and go home. The stepwise motion of the Shire theme modulates through a series of dark chords, unwilling to find its way back home. Finally the line lands in clarinet, but it expands tragically through the strings reaching past the Shire's simple music, and Frodo and Gollum continue their trek without Sam. Sam is crushed, and falls, sobbing, to his knees.

Frodo and Gollum climb higher and higher and Dangerous Passes arcs before them, the cruel glow of Sauron's lair still looming on the horizon.

IN THE MAKING:

The very end of this composition, which features Dangerous Passes and the Mordor theme, does not appear in the film. The shots for which it was composed were cut from the film.

6 – MARSHALLING AT DUNHARROW



En route to Minas Tirith, the Rohirrim amass their collective forces at Dunharrow. Although a society of Nature, Rohan's theme is routed to a squared-away series of contrapuntal statements transmitted between strings, French horns and [Hardanger](#). Even the melody line itself is hammered into a more aggressive countenance. The telltale rising minor third interval that traditionally opens the theme is now stretched a whole tone higher, into a perfect fourth—an interval only a whole step away from the declamatory opening of the Gondor theme. This is Rohan at the most regal, most urban end of their capacity. As they near Gondor they become, in a way, more like it. And yet, they're able to retain their essential sensitivity—the connection to Middle-earth that is so crucial to their existence. As the militaristic rigor

subsides that gentility emerges. Riding among the troops, rallying them, Théoden is dismayed to find so few have come. French horns sing the Rohan theme more softly, over *tremolo* strings.

The string writing suddenly changes its tenor, rising weightlessly until it hangs mistily over the orchestra. Gimli and Legolas peer down the valley of Harrowdale as once again the Army of the Dead begins. But this time it is no far off twinge. Aragorn stares down the narrow mouth of the road. Men's voices are audible, calling with the text of "[The Dimholt Road](#)": "Come armed/or prepared to die./There is no other end/to this road." The faintest hints of a glowing apparition can be seen, challenging Aragorn's gaze. Bassoon and [hanging Tibetan gongs](#) twist and contort behind the broad choral lines as the aural equivalents of reanimated bone and battle-ravaged metal. The Army of the Dead awaits.

Within the nighttime encampment, Merry readies himself for battle—or at least does so to the limited extent of hobbit abilities. For all their resolve, the Shirefolk are not built for war. Woodwinds and *pizzicato* strings tickle the edges of the Hobbits' Antics (and, by proxy, the End Cap) as Merry, bedecked in his new ill-fitting armor, practices his blade work before Éowyn. Out of the violas and cello flows a darker melodic shape, a line that seems at once informed by the B phrase of the Fellowship theme, the Rohan Fanfare's minor mode and the canorous linearity of the Shire theme. This is Merry the Warrior. Hobbits may lack a physical aptitude for battle but, perhaps better than most, they understand its responsibilities and sadness. Éomer chuckles at the sight of Merry, doubting his abilities. But Éowyn knows that her brother doubts her as well, and protests, creating her own tie to Merry's warrior theme.

Beneath Dunharrow, upon the Stair of the Hold, a cloaked rider approaches, his coming infecting Aragorn's sleeping mind with horrific visions. He sees himself thrust towards the Dimholt Road, he sees Arwen's Evenstar pendant shattered, and he sees Arwen upon her death bed, alone, deprived of his presence. The [Army of the Dead](#) theme plays again, preponderantly developed. Aragorn has long grappled with his inheritance, but his concerns are now drawing to a head. He fears the Paths of the Dead as he fears his own weaknesses. But his love for Arwen has caused him to fear even more for another, to put her safety before his. Aragorn is beginning to adopt the mindset of a benevolent ruler. The Army of the Dead theme *crescendos* and suddenly cuts off. With a start, Aragorn wakes from his vision. The guard at his door informs him he has a visitor.

UNUSED CONCEPT:

The Army of the Dead theme playing under Aragorn's nightmare was not used in the film. On disc, it ties Aragorn's fears and his understanding of his responsibilities—a telling psychological portrait of a leader pushed to serve by his concern for others.

7 – ANDÚRIL—FLAME OF THE WEST

Aragorn enters Théoden's tent where the mysterious hooded rider awaits him. Tense low brass chords reveal Aragorn's apprehension. The figure stands and removes his hood. It is Lord Elrond, come at Arwen's behest. Aragorn bows his head and the orchestra warms with rich harmonies as French horn sounds Rivendell's theme. But Elrond's news is heavy. Arwen, having released her immortality, is now threatened by the Ring. And Aragorn's march to Gondor is futile: the Rohirrim are too few in number. The armies of Men are no match for the multiple forces soon to congregate upon the Pelennor—including a fleet of Corsair ships secretly approaching Minas Tirith from the south. The London Philharmonic again sinks to its low end. Reluctantly, Elrond offers his advice. "There are those who dwell in the mountain." A blast of wind blows through the tent; high strings climb, suggesting the dyadic harmonies of the Army of the Dead. Aragorn protests, "They answer to no one," but Elrond persists. "They will answer to the King of Gondor."

From beneath his cloak he produces Andúril, reforged from the shards of Narsil. The Rivendell theme billows in a flourish of strings. Elrond explains to Aragorn that this is the sword of the King. Minas Tirith's theme stands tall in the brass, proudly recalling Gondor's noble heritage. Aragorn takes the sword, grasps its hilt and unsheathes it. The theme rises through silvery trumpets. "The blade that was broken shall return to Minas Tirith." Aragorn will no longer dodge his heritage. Even should it lead him to personal ruin, he will lead. High string clusters mark the possibility of this self-sacrifice.

8 – THE PASSING OF THE GREY COMPANY

Aragorn packs his scant belongings and prepares to take to the Dimholt Road. Éowyn confronts him, shocked that he would leave the men on the eve of battle, and thinking him a deserter. Double fiddle sings the sad strains of Éowyn and Aragorn, its emotive, woody tone evoking romantic yearning, and strain. Aragorn finally addresses her love, gently telling her that they cannot be together. The Shieldmaiden of Rohan is crushed. Her eyes wrapped in tears she stands motionless as Aragorn kindly strokes her face, then sets out to leave the camp.

But where a man of the Fellowship goes, Elf and Dwarf are never far behind. Gimli and Legolas stop Aragorn and, with a strain of the Fellowship theme that is both tenuous and generous, inform him that he will not travel the Dimholt alone. Strings pass the theme to brass, warming it until, with a sudden chill, the music is gutted by the hollow tones of the Army of the Dead. Above the Army theme, Fellowship continues to play in the Horns, insecure, abandoned by harmonic support, but sure-headed still.

The Men of Rohan, however, are far less directed. They see the Fellowship depart and are unnerved. They declare that hope is no more. Gamling articulates the men's fears, telling Théoden, "Too few have come. We cannot defeat the armies of Mordor." A low line for timpani, celli and basses snakes through the score, manifested by doubt. Théoden speaks, acknowledging that no, they cannot win. Tenuous brass bolsters this line, abating the fear ever so slightly. "But we will meet them in battle nonetheless."

Dawn breaks. Théoden seeks out his niece, Éowyn, and tells her that she is to rule in his stead, should he fall in battle. But Éowyn wishes to serve a more immediate need. She wants to fight. Théoden will not ask her to. Instead, he asks her simply to smile again. To remember her joy, and not mourn those who have lived their lives and come to honorable ends. Violins play a line infused with hope, beauty and melancholy. It leads to a breathing organic shape as Théoden draws Éowyn nearer. Horn brushes the edges of Rohan's theme, but it is followed by subtle suggestions of All Shall Come to Darkness... the music that once represented Boromir's death, and now predicts another noble man about to meet his end.



9 – DWIMORBERG—THE HAUNTED MOUNTAIN

Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli travel the Dimholt Road. The Army of the Dead theme now fully unearths itself, men's voices fading attenuated horizontal phrases one into the next while strings needle the orchestra from above, and gongs disrupt it from below. The music plays to unseen eyes, creating a truly haunted sense, as if the Fellowship's every step were increasingly enveloped by a massing, edgeless presence.

Scarred rock and dead trees lead the troupe to a door in the Dwimorberg mountain. Celli and basses play a chromatic line touched by the tremors of tam-tam rolls. The door coughs up a gale of wind and the Fellowship's horses abandon them. The orchestra thickens, high strings clotting their diatonic harmonies while mid- and low-brass shudder with chromatic clusters. Undeterred, Aragorn tucks his head and walks straight into the wind, through the door and into Dwimorberg. The harmony clarifies, prouder consonances shining through. Legolas follows. Gimli pauses, but with a pair of Fellowship-derived chords, charges in. Dissonance swallows them all, and they disappear into the dark.

10 – MASTER MERIADOC, SWORDTHAIN

The hour upon them, the Rohirrim mount their horses to begin the last three-day leg of their ride to Minas Tirith. The new perfect fourth setting of the Rohan Fanfare is channeled into a busy compound meter variation matched to this flurry of activity. Théoden informs Merry that he is not to fight with the men after all, and the hobbit pleads with the king. Sir James Galway's whistle sympathizes with the hobbit, but Théoden holds fast. Merry can do little else but stand and watch as the troops ride away, until a masked rider gallops next to the hobbit, grabbing him and hoisting him upon the horse. Merry is shocked. But, if the rider's voice doesn't betray the ruse, Shore's score does. For the first time in *The Lord of the Rings*, the Éowyn Shieldmaiden of Rohan theme is used not to portray a suffering character, forced to watch her people struggle while she watches from safe distances. Disguised as Dernhelm, Éowyn will fight with the men of Rohan. And now Merry will too. Brass declares Éowyn's theme in a near fanfare until, with a clash of cymbals, the orchestra again begins its thumping stride. High strings carry the faintest suggestion of Nature's Reclamation. The riders set forth in great streams, and the Rohan Fanfare sounds one more time in a vigorously commanding Lydian setting.

11 – THE PATHS OF THE DEAD

Strings breathe acrid dust of the Army of the Dead theme while bass drum beats a near-subliminal pulse. Low woodwinds join the primarily dyadic harmonies as gongs clang away in complex rhythmic prods. Aragorn and his companions now walk the Paths of the Dead.

The air grows denser, the mist twirling into finger-like appendages as low strings cast aleatoric patterns. Aragorn comes to a great subterranean tower and contrabassoon, celli and basses present a chalk-dry reading of the Realm of Gondor's opening pitches. Now accepting his heritage, will Aragorn actually succeed in leading this rabble? At the tower's gate there reappears the glowing apparition Aragorn envisioned at Dunharrow. The ghostly whine of bowed cymbals and tam-tam above string harmonics introduces the King of the Dead. Aragorn calls for the King's allegiance, but he is mocked spitefully. Under a series of piquant bi-tonal chords an entire city suddenly fades to the realm of the visible—a city peopled by the Army of the Dead.

The orchestra swells into multiple planes of dissonant clusters seeping across all ranges and instruments, lines gliding to and fro transparently over one another. The Army surrounds the Fellowship and its King draws his blade. He swings at Aragorn, but his blow is parried by Andúril. He is shocked. "That line was broken," he rasps. Aragorn catches him by the throat as brass conjures a forceful fanfare of pyramiding dissonances. "It has been remade!"

The Heir of Isildur casts the King of the Dead aside. As the soldiers' empty sockets look on, he makes his case. The percussion section's bowed metal squeals in pained friction. Aragorn promises the Army freedom should they serve him. The metallic clanks build, Tibetan gongs joining, as aleatoric low brass chews at the texture.

The Army of the Dead fades from sight and the city is overrun by a torrent of human skulls. The Fellowship races to escape, emerging on Dwimorberg's opposite side. There Aragorn sees Elrond's words born out—a fleet of ships belonging to the Corsairs of Umbar sail towards Minas Tirith before his eyes. A stretched version of *Evil Times* regards the sight. Aragorn falls to his knees. But something pulls at the back of his mind. Strings again rise in dyadic writing. The King of the Dead emerges through the wall of the mountain. "We fight." And, with a unison B natural, we segue to the mounting battle that calls them.

12 – THE SIEGE OF GONDOR

Vast armies of Orcs stand before the gates of Minas Tirith, moving their attack towers into place. But of more immediate concern is a single horse dragging its unconscious rider towards the city. The gates part and Faramir's body is brought inside. He is alive, having survived the slaughter at Osgiliath, but stuck with arrows and in grave condition. Shore's composition opens with leaping fifths, attempting to find Gondor's theme in the glowering madness, but unable to form it.



As Gothmog prepares to lead the Orcs at Minas Tirith's base Faramir is brought before his father at the city's peak. A steady cadence stiffens the orchestra fatalistically, these coincident events serving to unnerve Denethor and deprive Gondor of any leadership (just or not) in its hour of greatest need. The Orcs load their catapults and lob a volley at the Gondorian foot soldiers—their gory ammunition, the heads of those who fell at Osgiliath. Actions this black-hearted can only be motivated by Sauron's Black Hand, so Mordor's Descending Third motive begins the march to the pit of Gondor's despair.

Denethor, still reeling from the sight of Faramir, staggers to the outer rim of his courtyard. The orchestra builds and gathers into a brisk, grotesque *allegro*. For the first time, Denethor is drawn from his sulking stupor and

understands that he has left Gondor bereft of leadership as its enemies moved against it. Legions upon legions of Orcs, Trolls and Wargs mar the Pelennor. The Orcs load their catapults with heavy rock now, and begin toppling Gondor's towers, the Descending Third following the collapse with a sickening literality. The orchestra's climb continues in harsh atonal melodies, supported with ever denser orchestrations. His sense now irretrievable, Denethor cries for an impossible retreat. For Mankind, there is nowhere left to go, nothing left to do.

But for the wizard, now is the time to act. Gandalf brandishes his staff as a weapon and disables Denethor, knocking him to the stones of his own courtyard. Violins sustain a single pitch until, with a flash of bright orchestral color, the White Rider (in the Fellowship) sounds and Gandalf races to Minas Tirith's lower levels. He will lead Gondor's soldiers.

The tempo quickens once again, a primitive Orkish drumbeat struck beneath the pitched instruments. Unison brass plays an opaque setting of Gondor's theme but, already at the battle's onset, this is Gondor in Decline. The realm is unprepared for such an onslaught. The men use Minas Tirith's trebuchets to launch the wreckage of their own towers towards the Orcs—it being the only ammunition readily available. Chromatic clusters mark the impact, but there is little lasting value. Mordor's Fourth Age begins to dredge its way up from the ensemble's depths.

Without warning, Mordor's second Fourth Age theme descends from above. **Mixed chorus** performs the Power of Mordor, the advancement of the Ringwraith theme. Built off the same secundal harmonies, this theme represents the Wraiths' most ruthless, savage attacks. The line itself is streamlined and emphasizes sustained pitches over short punctuations. It too, however, is supported by the

IN THE MAKING:

The Power of Mordor actually began life in the early cut of *Fellowship's* Prologue. When the sequence was re-edited, Shore restructured his composition and this motif was removed. Hints of it can still be heard during the Council of Elrond, but the line does not appear in its full choral guise until *The Return of the King*.

ceaseless mark of the Descending Third, representing Mordor's ever-extending control. Upon the scaly backs of their fell beasts the Riders attack from the sky, clawing at the Gondorian soldiers, tearing their forces asunder.



Mountain Trolls move the Orcs' towers into position. The Fourth Age Orcs of Mordor theme is again roused in the brass' depths. The Orcs storm the city as an inverted setting of the Cruelty of the Orcs stings the orchestra's middle range. The Orcs maraud towards Pippin, who is completely overwhelmed by the battle. Over the orchestra's black pulsation, trumpets manage to seek out a few bars of the Fellowship theme and Gandalf rushes to the hobbit's aid. But Gandalf turns his back for a moment, opening himself to an attack from the Orcs. Pippin returns the favor and, for the first time, stains his blade with Orc blood.

A battering ram is brought to the front gate, and again the Orcs of Mordor themes exacerbate the orchestra in canonic overlaps. Dissatisfied with the attack, Gothmog calls for Grond. Two mountain trolls and three horned beasts drag the Hammer of the Underworld into position, their heavy gait earning the return of the Five Beat Pattern, now laced with the Evil of the Ring. The Orcs chant, their Fourth Age theme tumbling out yet again, its profane enthusiasm undeterred.

Meanwhile, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli watch the Corsairs' ships continue to steal down the river. Unwillingly aided by Gimli, Legolas catches a directorial-looking bosun with his arrow. The Corsairs turn their attention to the three figures on the riverbank who have the incredible gall to strike their forces. They laugh ruefully until, with a smoldering wash of sharply dissonant clusters, a semitransparent force charges them, obliterating their fleet.

13 – SHELOB'S LAIR

Now alone, Frodo follows Gollum's lead. He is beckoned to enter the dank mouth of a tunnel. Hesitant, he falters, but Gollum prods him. "Go in, or go back." Shore's music here is unusually dissonant, seemingly free of the tones that have thus far painted Middle-earth. Something is very wrong. The orchestra moves in opposing directions, the linear counterpoint thickening into a complex web. A chromatic eight-note motive in bassoon and low strings falls, striking an oddly regular rhythmic profile. Frodo is surrounded by death. The moldering carcasses of birds and Orcs hang from the ceiling; bone fragments litter the ground. Frodo darts away as a slew of sixteenth notes scramble through the orchestra.

Outside, Sam descends the stairs. He still sobs, and is backed by a chromatically altered Evil Times. He loses his footing and falls down the steps, landing by the lembas bread that Gollum tossed aside. He looks to the top of the stairs, the strings' scrambling sixteenths returning.

Now in a full panic, Frodo wildly searches the web-encrusted tunnel for an exit. But the more he struggles to depart, the deeper in he seems to find himself. The orchestra's strings frantically bowing, Frodo flails in the dark until he finds himself ensnared in web. He remembers the Light of Eärendil, the phial Galadriel gave him so long ago, hearing her words in his head, "May it be a light for you in dark places, where all other lights go out." Celli and basses sing Lothlórien, a theme that was at one time so foreign, so exotic and dangerous, but is now a welcome friend and ally. But the warmth is short lived, and the end of the melody shoots up in a noisome *portamento*. The light has exposed what lurks behind Frodo—Shelob!



The orchestra wriggles, contrapuntal fragments entwining and disengaging independently. The beast rears, hungry to feast upon Frodo, but warded off by the light. Frodo darts down a narrow corridor, thinking he has evaded Shelob, who is too large to follow. The orchestra charges, variations on the stepwise opening of the Seduction theme playing in fitful bursts, not unlike the music heard in Moria. But its forward momentum runs aground, restrained by jittering twitters and dissonant swells. Frodo is caught, suspended in an enormous web. The eight-note phrase returns. Shelob has come to claim her prize.

With a static trill, Gollum pops up from behind a boulder, taunting Frodo, finally revealing that, yes, he is more than ready to see the hobbit dead. The eight-note theme sounds again, this time clearer. Shelob approaches. Frodo slices at the web with Sting, hobbit rhythms singing sour dissonances behind him—as if the Hobbits' Antics figure were spoiled into a desperate action motif. At the last minute, Frodo is able to escape, leaving behind his sword in the process.

But as soon as he is out of Shelob's range, Gollum's spindly form tackles him. Low brass chords are speared with individual pitches, doubled in octaves as Gollum tries wildly to snatch the Ring from around Frodo's neck. But, driven by the Ring, Frodo protects it with an equal fervor. He turns the tables on Gollum, taking the offensive, beating him down to the ground. The music is unchanged. Be they instigated by a villain or a hero, the violent actions dictated by the Ring are equally awful.

In a harsh trill of woodwinds and strings, Frodo remembers himself. The six-note version of the Evil of the Ring sounds distantly as he falls back off Gollum. He cannot kill this wretch. But Gollum has no such qualms. Frodo tells him he plans to destroy the Ring. The low end of the orchestra shudders as string lines amass above, again suggesting Evil. Gollum throws himself murderously at Frodo, but topples over him and down the side of a cliff. *Cor anglais* sounds Evil's six-note theme one more time as Gollum plummets down into darkness.

Frodo is overwhelmed with exhaustion. He drops but, just as he hits the ground, experiences a vision. He is back in Lothlórien. Flutes play with the clean, bright open fifth intervals of Elvenkind, soon to be joined by wordless female chorus. A glowing figure draped in white appears as the *cor* returns Galadriel's theme to *The Lord of the Rings* for the final time. She offers Frodo her hand and, with a sudden, slight *crescendo*, lifts him back to his feet.

14 – MERRY'S SIMPLE COURAGE

Solo trumpet calls out the Rohan Fanfare over rolling field drums. The riders take their final pause before arriving at Minas Tirith. The line ends with a subtle nod to the Fellowship theme, indicative of just how far the tenets of the Company have come. Merry explains to Éowyn that he knows his own limitations, but that he rides on not in hopes of saving Middle-earth, but simply to save his friends. The thoughtful strains of Merry the Warrior return.

Horns and trumpets call open intervals, acting as the war horns of the Rohirrim. They will ride through the night, and arrive at Minas Tirith at dawn to meet the Orc host.

DISC THREE

1 – GROND—THE HAMMER OF THE UNDERWORLD



Over the Five Beat Pattern brass sounds a theme that combines the Realm of Gondor and the Evil of the Ring into a single corrosive theme. The assault on Minas Tirith has escalated. The lower levels burn while Grond's grimacing snout grows ever-nearer to bursting through the main gate. Evil is taking the night, and soon its theme dominates the score, Mordor's rhaita returning to present the line again over the Orcs' lopsided Five Beat Pattern.

Grond breaks through and Minas Tirith's entrance is flooded with armored Mountain Trolls and Orcs. A deep brass setting of the Realm of Gondor tries valiantly to rally its remaining courage, but it too is beaten down by the constant assailment and gives way to the Evil of the Ring.

2 – SHELOB THE GREAT

Weary but driven, Frodo pushes on through the edge of Torech Ungol—Shelob's Lair. A faint tremor in the music reveals that the giant spider is once again hunting Frodo, eager to make a meal of his flesh. Frodo senses something is wrong, his eyes combing the darkness for any sign of a pursuer. The score attempts vainly to locate Shelob's eight-note motive, but it refuses to materialize. With a sudden plunge and a convulsion of strings, Frodo is struck. Shelob has hunted him from above. The demonic spirit catches Frodo's paralyzed body and spins him, encasing him in her web. Shore's music rattles with a chattering snare drum, what the composer refers to as a "diabolical sewing machine." Metal chimes clank away, relating Shelob to the industrial militarism of Mordor, her home for centuries.

But a familiar glow catches the spider's eye. Samwise, carrying Galadriel's phial and Frodo's sword, has come back. The Fellowship theme announces his appearance, brassily proclaiming Sam's heroism. Shelob drops Frodo, launching her massive form at Sam. In the complex knot of Shelob's musical voice the two fight. With a sustained horn line, Sam thrusts Sting into Shelob's gullet, wounding her. She is staggered, her limbs flail in pain, and she is left to do naught but slink off back into the darkness, taking her compositional voice with her.

Sam rushes to Frodo and parts the webbing over his face. Frodo, eyes wide and unblinking, lies utterly motionless. Sam weeps while elegiac strings and *cor anglias* mourn his loss, the Shire theme here stained by the hobbit's tears. But he hasn't long to sorrow, for soon Sting glows blue. Orcs are about! Sam realizes now how near they are to Cirith Ungol, and ducks away just before a troop of monstrously gnarled Orcs arrives. The Descending Third motive follows them, extending, here in Sauron's domain, far past its usual limit.

3 – THE TOMB OF THE STEWARDS

Sam overhears the Orcs and learns Frodo is not dead, flutes piquing along with his interest. The Orcs pick Frodo up in order to cart him to Cirith Ungol. At a safe distance, Sam pursues.

But concurrent to Sam's renewed hope is Denethor's total abandonment of the same. The steward prepares a funeral pyre, the flames of which are meant to engulf both him and Faramir. Horns, trombone and tuba chant bits of the Ring's History/Evil

IN THE MAKING:

The first part of this composition, where Shelob hunts and strikes Frodo, was not used at all in the film—silence and sound effects carried the scene. The first part of Sam's fight with Shelob was not used in the film either, though there music from earlier in the Shelob sequence was reused.

hybrid—Denethor has lost his sense just as his city needs him the most, maddened by his lust for the Ring. Pippin attempts to free Faramir, but Denethor casts him out of the chamber. The hobbit searches through the streets for Gandalf, but the city burns, overrun by a host of Mordor’s most horrid warriors. The chorus’ sopranos sing Tolkien’s text “On the Fields of Pelennor” to the hybrid History/Evil theme.

IN THE MAKING:

Shore’s music for the beginning Gandalf/Witch-king face-off was not used in the final film. This music picks up once Gandalf is knocked from Shadowfax.

At daybreak Pippin finds Gandalf and the two rush to Faramir’s side, accompanied by Gondor’s opening pitches in high, clear trumpet—the instrumental timbre of Mankind. But they are intercepted by the most dangerous of their attackers, the Witch-king of Angmar himself. The increscent orchestra thunders with dissonance as the Rider holds his sword to the sky, summons his evil might from a vortex of fiery clouds and shatters Gandalf’s staff. Gandalf falls from Shadowfax as contrabassoon grunts the Threat of Mordor, a threat which has not so directly touched Gandalf the White since he was Gandalf the Grey. The Witch-king prepares to strike the wizard, but distant horns on the horizon distract him, staying his hand, drawing him to the fields below.

4 – THE BATTLE OF THE PELENNOR FIELDS

The Rohirrim have arrived at Minas Tirith, the line of Riders extending over the width of the horizon. French horns ceremoniously recite the Rohan theme over the perpetual churn of militaristic percussion. Théoden surveys the battle before him, bathed in the milky light of predawn, and turns to the soldiers. Evil Times takes the music, but in such a vein that it holds its head high, the grand harmonies insistent that this suffering, these sacrifices in the War of the Ring, shall not be in vain.

The King calls to the Riders and touches their spears with his sword. “Ride now! Ride for ruin and the world’s ending!” Nature’s Reclamation begins a slow build through its first melodic phrase. Behind the Riders the sun breaks over the horizon, casting its glow behind the Riders like their last line of offense. The orchestra is invigorated, Nature’s melody leaping up into heraldic trumpets and high strings. With the will of Middle-earth at their heels, the Riders launch their attack, the front line charging towards the Orkish legion. The Hardanger steps to the fore to sing a doxology for Rohan over the orchestra’s thunder. Trumpets take the theme, embracing the Hardanger’s dedication. The Orcs’ faces spread in fear—this is no lot of unprepared Men. Brass fanfares in gleaming triplets erupt over the charge. The armies collide, not with a wincing dissonance, but with rich major-moded sonorities. Rohan is a force of Nature.

IN THE MAKING:

The percussion writing for the first collision of Men and Orcs was shortened slightly in the film.

5 – THE PYRE OF DENETHOR

Denethor douses himself with thick oil. Percussion continues a steady pulse, indicative of the raging war outside as well as the raging madness inside the steward’s mind. Gandalf bursts through the door with the bright burst of an open fifth. But Denethor already holds a torch. The orchestra shivers with an operatic series of inverting A-minor chords. With a scrape of the tam-tam he drops the torch next to Faramir’s head, the neighboring area conflagrating.

Swiftly, Gandalf approaches, Pippin close behind. The wizard knocks Denethor to his back while Pippin climbs atop the pyre, dislodging Faramir with a splashing C-major triad. But Denethor is still conscious. He grabs the hobbit, attempting to allow Faramir to burn. But Shadowfax rears back, his hoof knocking Denethor back to the pyre. Just before the fire envelops him, Denethor sees Faramir’s eyes flutter, and knows his son is still alive. Denethor runs to the outmost wall of the top tier of Minas Tirith and throws himself off.

His fiery form can be seen from the field below, where the war still rages. There, despite their lesser numbers, the Rohirrim seem to be turning the Orcs back. The London Voices again sing “On the Fields of Pelennor,” but now in a more triumphant setting. Théoden prepares to move into Minas Tirith and secure the city from within, but a terrible sight takes hold of him.

6 – THE MÛMAKIL

The Mordor Outline, the heavy timpani-laden line heard submerged beneath Sauron's most prominent threats, declaims its turbulent presence. From the south come the Haradrim, men of war, allies of Sauron, upon the backs of enormous Mûmakil. Shore introduces a variant of the Mordor Outline that is not unlike that heard in Osgiliath. Here it is heavier, more plodding. However, it promises the same result: slaughter. The Rohirrim reform their line and charge to meet the Haradrim head-on.

Though the Mûmakil wring no specific theme from the score, they are regularly portrayed with specific orchestral structures. The bottom of the ensemble bears the burden of the creatures' mass with hefty melodic limbs while the upper voices spin and sizzle. In battle, their music is no different, though the ensembles upper *tessitura* would seem to represent Rohan's swift attack as much as the oliphants.

7 – DERNHELM IN BATTLE

The Riders of Rohan attack the Mûmakil with all their swift might, but blunt as their attack may be, the Haradrim are expert riders in their own right. Éowyn, in her Dernhelm disguise, comes beneath one Mûmak and slices its legs, toppling it to the ground, but the impact shakes both her and Merry loose from their horse.

Now at a better vantage point, she sees Théoden surrounded by Orcs and rushes to his aid. The music both rumbles and twitters with the battle's opposing forces, but an increasing dissonance and reliance on secundal harmonies suggests a more nefarious approach.

Théoden spies Éowyn, recognizing, in a momentary bewilderment, his niece in battle. But war holds no space for family, and so he fights on, slicing through the decreasing crowd of Orcs. Merry soaks his blade in the blood of the Haradrim while Éowyn, slices at Gothmog's one good leg.

More close-spaced harmonies sound. A quick-paced reading of the Mordor Outline shudders through the timpani—the Witch-king exits the upper tiers of Minas Tirith and descends upon the Pelennor.



8 – “A FAR GREEN COUNTRY”

IN THE MAKING:

The film uses a different first performance on the Grey Havens theme, which features humming voices. This music was edited in from the music wrote for the film's concluding chapters.

The Gondorian soldiers have retreated to the upper level of Minas Tirith, where a Mountain Troll beats its great leaden hammer upon the final door. The men have nowhere left to go. Pippin is fearful of death and tells Gandalf, “I didn't think it would end this way.” Gandalf, unwavering in the face of danger, quietly regards him. “End? No, the journey doesn't end here.” At this, the apparent hour of Mankind's doom, Shore introduces one of the most important musical themes in *The Lord of the Rings*, the theme of the Grey Havens.

The cellists of the London Philharmonic embrace this diatonic melody in the most singing ranges of their instruments. *Cor anglais* and clarinet offer humble counterlines and full strings harmonize with placid, non-vibrato chords. Gandalf tells Pippin of the next world that awaits—the reward for a life lived honorably.

The door shakes again and the Grey Havens theme fades, replaced by a stepwise cluster. Gandalf nods to Pippin. Their time has come.

On the Pelennor, the tide has turned. The Mûmakil toss the Rohirrim about like playthings. And, from the sky, Théoden sees a shadow approach. Horns build as the Witch-king's fell beast clutches Théoden and Snowmane, his horse, in its jaws and spits them back to the earth. Théoden gasps for air, pinned beneath Snowmane. The Lord of the Nazgûl approaches.

9 – SHIELDMAIDEN OF ROHAN



Bravely, Éowyn steps into his path, impeding his ingress. The fell beast lunges at her, but she decapitates it with two strokes of her blade. The Witch-king dismounts his dying steed, and draws himself up before this foolhardy soldier who dares to come between a Nazgûl and its prey. Mixed chords enter on the secundal harmonies of the Ringwraith theme, now set to “[Angmar](#).” He hurls his flail at Éowyn and a new variation of The Threat of Mordor appears

below the chorus, now chromatically bent to match the exotic harmonies of Mordor. He strikes Éowyn, crushing her arm and she falls back on Snowmane.

Elsewhere, upon the outskirts of the city, the Corsairs’ black-sailed ships arrive before a crowd of Orcs. But no sailors are visible. A bass drum rolls expectantly. Three figures disembark: Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli. A driving trumpet reading of Fellowship greets them, and the trio marches towards the Orcs, wildly outmatched. But as they charge, an eerie spectral mist materializes behind them. Aragorn leads the Army of the Dead! Shore produces a roiling *marche macabre* comprised of bi-tonal figures and clusters. The long-dead warriors wash over the Orcs, flooding into Minas Tirith and the Pelennor.

But this band will not meet Éowyn in time. The Descending Third motif at his back, the Witch-king takes Éowyn by the throat, brass chords again swelling with close harmonies. “Fool, no man can kill me.” But Merry catches the Witch-king in the back of the leg, sending his small sword through the Nazgûl’s leg. The Witch-king falls to his knees, and Merry collapses. Éowyn tears her helmet from her head, seizing her chance. “I am no man!” The French horns proclaim the Éowyn and Théoden theme in a gleaming Lydian mode. She juts her sword into the Witch-king’s head and he crumples and dies.

At the head of his ghostly army, Aragorn takes to the Pelennor. A minor reading of the Gondor theme shows the advantage once again rests with Men, but the battle is not yet over. With a peal of string harmonics Gothmog pursues Éowyn, both of them crawling, subjected to their wounds. Aragorn reaches Gothmog just in time and kills him. A snippet of the same fanfare heard when Pippin dislodged Faramir from the pyre sounds—a theme for small victories at Minas Tirith.

Legolas sees a Mûmak loaded with Haradrim soldiers approaching. He rushes the beast and the dichotomous weighty/spirited, deep/high music of the Mûmakil returns. But this time the advantage belongs to the Elf. The music dives steeply into crackling fanfares reminiscent of the great tradition of cinematic spectacle. Shore recalls, “If I was ever going to write in a Max Steiner vein, this was it!” With a clip of Fellowship, Legolas slices the howdah’s supports, sending the Mûmak’s riders crashing to the grassy fields below. The heroes’ theme broadens, and Legolas fells the beast with three precisely placed arrows.

IN THE MAKING:

The theatrical version of this scene was shorter, but featured a version of Gondor (in Ascension) that was not used in the Extended Edition.

10 – THE PASSING OF THÉODEN

The Army of the Dead pours over the walls of Minas Tirith, overwhelming the simple-minded Orcs with fear and destroying them. But no victorious music emerges. *Cor anglais* sorrows over minor-moded strings. King Théoden lies dying upon the Pelennor. Éowyn crawls to his side and he looks upon her smile one last time. Chorus somberly intones “*Death of a King*” in Old English, but this is not the music of Men. This is music of the next world, tones one step closer to the music of Valinor. The World of Men fades away. With a final remembrance, French horn recites the Rohan Fanfare. King Théoden, son of Thengel, passes.

11 – THE HOUSES OF HEALING

Featuring Liv Tyler

Pippin searches through the battle’s debris and finds a cloak adorned with an Elvish brooch—Merry’s cloak. Éomer discovers Éowyn, badly wounded, collapsed upon the figure of her perished uncle. Aragorn and Gandalf survey the carnage. Now is the time for healing.

Under Aragorn’s care, Éowyn recovers in the Houses of Healing. “*Arwen’s Song*” acts here as an Elvish blessing—an ethereal prayer for the suffering. Arwen, too, is somewhere in Middle-earth, just as lovelorn. “And the trees are now turning from green to gold/And the sun is now fading...” And yet, there is still hope. Faramir has also recovered in the Houses of Healing. He smiles at Éowyn. “*Arwen’s Song*” continues, “I wish I could hold you closer.”

The whistle continues in the same tender vein. Late at night, Pippin has found Merry on the quiet battlefield. Stepwise passages recall the Shire theme, but more mature and worldly.

12 – THE TOWER OF CIRITH UNGOL

Brittle, *non-vibrato* strings scrape through thickly clotted harmonies. Upon the top level of Cirith Ungol, Frodo is held captive while two repulsive Orcs, Shagrat and Gorbag, feud over his mithril vest, of which he’s been stripped. Gorbag tosses Shagrat from his perch, igniting a furious scuffle among the Orc crowds. At the tower’s front opening Samwise Gamgee begins his surreptitious ascent. *Evil Times* sounds prominently, for what other than the vilest of times could bring a hobbit to Cirith Ungol? *Evil Times* is struck into an impellent compound-meter and Sam takes to the stairs. Nothing will stop Sam from reaching his

friend. He uses Sting to disable a trio of Orcs that block his path, and the Shire theme turns down a path it has not before seen. In a heroic dash of brass and strings the familiar stepwise line is led to unabashed heroism—Samwise the Brave, indeed.

Sam climbs higher, but Shagrat has reached Frodo too soon. The Orc raises his sword, angular patterns in low brass and piano clattering metallically. But trilling strings pierce the texture—Sam has arrived, and has thrust Sting through Shagrat’s chest. Frodo and Sam are reunited. But this is no cheery reunion. Dark string harmonies moan as Sam loosens Frodo’s bonds. They are still on the road to unknown horrors.

Contrabasses drop to the lowest possible pitch. Sam stands and reveals that he now carries the One Ring in his pocket. Frodo looks both fearful and greedily envious. Sam is stunned and stands motionless. But it is Frodo’s

depraved behavior that has immobilized him, not a lust for the Ring. He hands it back, the two clothe themselves with Orkish armor and return to the road. Languishing through the strings, *The Journey There* sounds yet again, arching higher and higher until, with a sallow knock, the orchestra drops to a chromatic cluster. The fires of Mordor are now before the two hobbits, and Sauron’s great eye hungrily scans the barren landscape for his treasure.



13 – THE LAST DEBATE

Featuring Sissel performing “Asëa Aranion”

Gandalf, Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas and Éomer congregate in Minas Tirith’s throne room debating their next move, very much aware of the little time remaining. Aragorn has a plan. If they are to draw Sauron’s Orcs out of the Black Gate, Frodo may yet be able to complete his journey to the Crack of Doom. The Fellowship theme builds slowly, cautiously. It is a risky move, one that, if poorly timed, could spell doom for all. But inherent in bravery is risk. The orchestra warms, setting its weight behind Aragorn’s decision.

The former Ranger takes Andúril, clutches the sword to his chest, and steps into the gaze of the Palantír. Sauron’s eye turns to him, his attention on this man who would claim the throne of Gondor. Aragorn attires himself in Gondorian armor, the White Tree proudly upon his chest, and leads the Army of the West towards the Black Gate. The Realm of Gondor sounds determinedly in Mankind’s brassy voice. Upon its last pitch it is chased by the Rohan Fanfare, both kingdoms now united.

Éowyn and Faramir watch from a high courtyard. The ancient tones of the wood flute, like the pan flute before it, express the ancient wisdom of Gondor. Gondor knows war as the gateway to peace, sorrows as the steppingstones on the road to joy. Éowyn and Faramir clasp hands. Norwegian singer, Sissel, sings “[Asëa Aranion](#),” which blossoms, like their love, over poignant strings and female chorus, decorated by *cor anglais* and French horn.

IN THE MAKING:

“Asëa Aranion,” which uses text from “The Grace of the Valar,” was originally written for the film’s Houses of Healing sequence. After “Arwen’s Song” was placed there, Shore engaged Sissel to perform “Asëa Aranion” for the film’s Fan Scroll suite.

It appears here, in the Complete Recordings, to represent the burgeoning love between Éowyn and Faramir.

14 – THE LAND OF SHADOW

Frodo and Sam encounter a parade of Orcs moving through the Black Land. The music of Mordor cackles all around them, spewing from the orchestra in a leathery gale. Though the Wraiths are not present, brass plays with their murky harmonies nonetheless, as if to expose the roots of the Nazgûl’s power. The Orcs come upon the disguised Frodo and Sam, but in their brutish ignorance, only whip them, commanding them to fall back into line. The hobbits join the Orcs’ march, rendering a disfigured combination of the Five Beat Pattern and the Threat of Mordor. A melodic line somewhere between Isengard’s theme and the Orcs’ Fourth Age motto sinuates through the pulsing, the orchestra a ropy net of timpani, bass drum, contrabassoon, low strings and brass.

From the other side of the Black Gate, Aragorn’s army continues its march, mankind’s brass striking chords against the growling Five Beat.

The Orcs pause for inspection, their bullish overseer, his face half rotted away by violence and neglect, combing through their ranks. He detects the hobbits! Aleatoric low brass juts in odd, scattered angles as he approaches. Sam saves Frodo in the only way he can—he hits him. Energized by the violence, the surrounding Orcs spread a riot, and again the Five Beat/Threat rants in the orchestra, the near-Isengard theme bellowing its war cry over it. In the midst of the violence, the hobbits steal away, climbing the final ridge before Gorgoroth. The orchestra coughs long, parched phrases, seeking the Journey There but too weary, too light-headed to find it.

While Frodo rests, Sam stares up at Mordor’s starless sky. Evil Times situates itself in the score’s foreground, again, unmoving, unflinching, unfeeling. But the clouds part slightly, and a sole star peeks through. Violins gather a collection of major harmonies into a swath of hope on the plateau.

Over a hushed march the first three pitches of Gondor sound. In the valley, the men can now see the outer border of Sauron’s lair.

Sam offers Frodo his water, but Frodo finishes his reserve and worries there won't be enough for the return trip. Sam shakes his head, "I don't think there will be a return journey, Mr. Frodo." Shore passes the opening pitches of the Shire up and down, reading the line forwards and backwards, sorrowfully echoing the discussion of a roundtrip. But with a swell, Sam helps his friend to his feet.

The subtle trod of military drums returns and the Army of the West organizes itself before Morannon, the Black Gate.

Frodo swats the air before him, hallucinating. Harrowed violins seem to suggest Ring themes, yet keep them hidden from sight. But Sauron's eye falls upon Frodo, the ensemble recoiling in a sudden sting of thick dissonance. Frodo drops; the great eye sees nothing.

With the snap of a snare drum Aragorn leads the Fellowship to the Gate's seam.

IN THE MAKING:

The music just before the eye comes to rest on Frodo was dissolved out of the final sound mix.

15 – THE MOUTH OF SAURON

Featuring Sir James Galway

IN THE MAKING:

"The Mouth of Sauron" was composed to an early cut of the scene that was tightened when edited into the film, so some musical passages were truncated. Shore's composition is heard here in its entirety.

Aragorn calls out to the Black Gate. With a throaty gasp of the six-note Evil theme, the gargantuan doors part. Out proceeds a rider, draped all in black, his eyes buried behind his helmet, his mouth a twisted, poisonous wound. It is the Mouth of Sauron, the Black Lord's repugnant emissary. The Lieutenant of Barad-dûr regards Aragorn's force mockingly. Gandalf commands him to relay a message to Sauron, "The armies of Mordor must disband. He is to depart these lands, never to return." Violins strike a familiarly pleading line... but it is not derived from Gandalf's request. It is the same line heard when Frodo came nearest to the Black Gate in *The Two Towers*, the melodic entreaty that underscored Gollum's manic begging.

Once again Frodo's name meets the Gate. The Mouth of Sauron produces Frodo's mithril vest, assuring his friends that the hobbit is dead, his mission failed. Pippin gasps, "Frodo!" The figure repeats, descending into the sorrowful B phrase of Gondor in Decline. Frodo was their last hope.

Aragorn rides to the front of the pack. French horn and strings shake with a telling phrase. The orchestra twitters with passing three-note figures, fragments of the Heroics of Aragorn. It is not yet the down-and-back-up figure that can change Gondor in Decline to Gondor in Ascension, but it marks an important turn. "It takes more to make a king than a broken Elvish blade," the Mouth of Sauron's final words ring true. Aragorn beheads Sauron's lieutenant with a shock of a varied Decline figure. A king must take action.

The orchestra stirs, striking up an unrelenting pulsation of low strings and woodwinds over a galloping percussion cadence. Aragorn will not believe that Frodo has failed. He will not give in to despair and hopelessness. He will not betray the trust of his people.

The Gates part wide, disgorging the Orkish host which has for so long lain in wait, ready to end mankind. Evil Times is tautened into an oscillating surge. Brass swells momentarily, singeing the texture as the red glow of Barad-dûr becomes visible, towering behind the Orcs. The Mordor Outline thumps in an eager, bloodthirsty retrograde.

Sauron's eye spins northerly towards the gate. Frodo and Sam are free to continue on, unwatched.

Gondor's ringing trumpet sounds. Aragorn comes before his men. "Sons of Gondor, of Rohan, my brothers!" Fellowship dilates the brass writing. "A day may come when the courage of Men fails, when we forsake our friends and break all bonds of fellowship. But it is not this day." Strings join the Fellowship theme, now singing its full phrase. "This day we fight!" Swords part scabbards; the Men of the West await the Orcs.

The pulsing ceases, all musical warmth dissipating. In the dust, Frodo and Sam climb the final embankment to the Cracks of Doom. Frodo has barely strength enough to stand, let alone climb the mountainside. Sir James Galway's whistle emits a singular, pure tone above the encroaching rumble of percussion. The stepwise motion of the Shire has come so far, but the journey's final steps may be its most perilous. Frodo lies motionless upon the soot. Chorus begins Philippa Boyens' "[The Argument](#)," the articulation of Sam's inner dialogue of doubt and determination. The whistle again tries to remember the Shire theme, locating its details but forgetting its tranquil peace.

Sam knows he cannot carry the Ring... but he can carry Frodo. Orchestra and chorus surge, emerging in a profound, enveloping statement of the Grey Havens. Sam's gift to Frodo, his strength, determination and resolve will, alone, allow Frodo to be free of the Ring. But it is an act of self-sacrifice at least equal to Frodo's—Sam knows that, one way or the other, he will lose Frodo.

IN THE MAKING:

The Original Soundtrack CD featured different, more hopeful music for Sam and Frodo's memories of the Shire, where the whistle line built directly into the Grey Havens theme. Here, as in the finished film, those memories are bitterer, and minor-moded string lines lead to the Grey Havens theme.

16 – "FOR FRODO" Featuring Ben del Maestro

Sauron calls to Aragorn, tempting him just as he's tempted his kin. Aragorn turns back to the Army of Men, motionless... and smiles. "For Frodo." Whether to aid a fallen friend, or honor his memory, Aragorn will lead his men in battle. He will shut out the voices of temptation, the personal weaknesses and fears. He will become the king that mankind needs.

As it never has before, and never will again, the Fellowship theme sounds in *religioso* full [chorus](#) and orchestra. It is the ultimate act of Fellowship, an act that embodies both the Company's mandate to destroy the Ring and the ideals the Ring threatens. The Army of the West charges, rushing toward the Orcs with unchecked abandon. The chorus continues as Sam carries his fallen friend towards the inferno's doorway a little further ahead.

But suddenly the voices lose the line, spinning into epic minor chords. Gollum emerges, leaping onto Sam's back, dislodging Frodo. The voices pick up the Mount Doom theme, two billowing minor chords a minor sixth apart. But these are also the opening harmonies of Gollum's Pity theme, a theme that has, all along, been hinting at Mordor's reserve of power without revealing its source. Gollum screams, maddened beyond retrieval. He claws at Frodo's throat, desperate to reclaim his Ring before it can reach the fires of Mount Doom. Hurling a heavy volcanic rock, Sam knocks Gollum aside, and the two roll downhill in a violent heap.

At the Black Gate the Nazgûl have arrived, the fell beasts soaring down in wicked sorties. A block of the Threat of Mordor is dislodged, in the brass. The beasts force their awful screams through their throats, but it is another winged creature that takes hold of the score. Gandalf pauses in the midst of battle as a tiny moth flutters before him. Boy soprano Ben del Maestro begins Nature's Reclamation. This is no brassy setting dedicated to Man's natural alliance, this is the music of... *the Eagles!* Swooping in, undetected, Gwaihir, the Windlord, leads five Eagles against the Nazgûl.

Sam has broken free of Gollum, and continues his way up the mountain. But, newly determined, Frodo has gotten ahead of him. Sam settles his eyes on Frodo just in time to see him dart into the glowing doorway of the Sammath Naur. Six French horns bellow the History/Evil of the Ring hybrid, calling out the moment of decision.



DISC FOUR

1 – MOUNT DOOM Featuring Renée Fleming

UNUSED CONCEPT:

The meta-Ring theme, which combines the History, Evil and Seduction themes into a single contrapuntal device, was not used in the final film.

Sam enters the chamber to find Frodo standing over the fire. The orchestra spins dizzily, a nauseous mix of harmonies swarming about its many ranges, as overwhelming as the broiling fires themselves. Frodo holds the Ring out over the flaming pits. Here, returned to its fiery womb, the multifaceted Ring is refocused, its history, its seductiveness and its great evil melded into a singular existence. Horribly, uncontrollably, the orchestra's high strings and winds begin the History/Evil of the Ring hybrid in a canon at the octave, while below low strings and voices sing the Seduction of the Ring. The overlapping motifs and

tonalities create a sonic blur, a hallucinatory slice of disjointed time. Frodo turns.

"The Ring is mine."

The Mount Doom theme howls its two mammoth chords—the same harmonies that drove Gollum's Pity theme—the same harmonies that now press Frodo's actions. The Mordor Outline pounds beneath, the timpani's strokes falling like hammers. The hobbit places the Ring on his finger and disappears. Sauron's gaze turns instantaneously back towards the Cracks of Doom, the Nazgûl pulling away from the Black Gate and rushing southwards.

From the acrid smog, Gollum emerges, bashing Sam on the head then, using his footprints as a guide, leaping onto the invisible Frodo. The vile creature locates Frodo's arm, extends it forcibly, and bites his ring finger, his teeth sinking through flesh, through muscle, through bone. Gollum hews the finger from Frodo's hand and spits the Ring back out. Frodo falls aside, and Gollum holds his precious skyward, beaming.

Mount Doom's boisterous music halts. A single voice becomes the sole focus of the score. Renée Fleming sings the Ring's purest celebration. It has stayed its destruction. It has won its existence. It is victorious.

But the music of the Ring is not done yet. Frodo returns to his feet, his snarling face turned towards Gollum. He rushes him... either to destroy the Ring or to reclaim it, even in his own heart, Frodo may not know. Mount Doom's theme fumes forth again. The two struggle furiously until they both pitch over the edge.



2 – THE CRACK OF DOOM

Gollum and the Ring fall into the molten rock below. With one last twinge of Ring-lust Gollum attempts to extend his hand above the fires. But to no avail. Gollum sinks below and dies, his precious Ring deposited upon the lava's surface. But Frodo has not fallen. With his one good hand he clings to the rocks. Sam scrambles to the precipice and extends his arm towards Frodo. Below in the intense fire, the Ring's inscription glows brightly like an inarticulate scream. The Ring's themes attempt to collect themselves, the first pitches of History—or Evil—sliding glassily in the violins. Reduced to its quintessence, the Ring's melodic line rises a half-step up-and-back-down. It is the antithesis of everything the Fellowship has represented. Through hours of music, the Fellowship's whole-step down-and-back-up has come to represent Middle-earth's honor. This, then, is everything it battles

against—Middle-earth's would-be nadir. "Don't let go," Sam screams to Frodo. The orchestra lifts through adjacent major chords, a melody of gladdened perseverance on the cusp of existence. Frodo reaches up to Sam and begins to climb back to solid ground.

UNUSED CONCEPT:

The Original Soundtrack Album to *The Return of the King* featured an earlier draft of Shore's music for the Ring's moment of destruction.

The chorus catches in an harmonic stasis, intoning a chant-like line. Holding perfectly still upon the fires of Mount Doom, the One Ring, the source of Sauron's power, the root of evil in Middle-earth, melts into nothingness.

It is destroyed.

The adjacent chords sound again, the perseverance melody now honoring the battle at the Black Gate. Sauron's host turn their attention to Barad-dûr where the great eye peels wide, trembling in pain.

The full force of the orchestra and chorus gathers the melodic line that once represented the Fate of the Ring and reforms the Ring themes' despair to embracing hope.

The Fate of the Ring is revealed in unchecked splendor as The Destruction of the Ring—the final Ring theme, its Fourth Age theme. Barad-dûr shatters and falls; Middle-earth opens the land and swallows the Orcs. Sauron's eye is extinguished. The Destruction of the Ring has ushered in the Fourth Age of Middle-earth.

IN THE MAKING:

The fall of Barad-dûr was altered in the final film with an insert of music intended for Aragorn's coronation. Heard here is Shore's original, complete composition.



Gondor Reborn, its Fourth Age theme, now sounds to its full length, a silver trumpet at its head.

The joyous Destruction of the Ring celebrates, once again, the carillon of Middle-earth's victory. Mount Doom explodes into a crest of fire... and the heroes pause. Did Frodo and Sam, their task complete, escape? Did the Ring claim them as its final victims?

Evil Times begins again as a reluctant chaconne—one which recalls another figure from the past, Gandalf's Farewells. With four similarly mournful chords, Gandalf the Grey once bid his friends goodbye. It now appears he, and the rest of the Fellowship, must say goodbye to Frodo and Sam.

3 – THE EAGLES

Featuring Renée Fleming

But Frodo and Sam are not yet gone. With their last ounce of strength, the two run from the Cracks of Doom, only to find themselves trapped on the steep outer wall of Mount Doom. Rivers of lava pour down the sides, plumes of ash and rock fuming from its vent. But even here, at the end of all things, Frodo is beholden to fate. "It's gone. It's done," he tells Sam. "I can see the Shire."

Gandalf's Farewells continues, now peacefully set for soprano voices. The two hobbits, the saviors of Middle-earth, prepare to accept death. Frodo hugs Sam. Wordlessly the voices sing of the Fellowship. All fades to black.



...But all does not end. Renée Fleming joins the score again to sing the Sindarin text, "The Eagles" over delicate strings and chorus. Three great birds appear, Gandalf at their lead. They grasp Frodo and Sam in their talons and carry them away from the death and destruction that pits Mordor.

4 – THE FELLOWSHIP REUNITED

Featuring Sir James Galway, Viggo Mortensen, and Renée Fleming

Frodo awakens in the Houses of Healing. Gandalf the White stands at the foot of his bed. Frodo is overwhelmed—he thought Gandalf to have perished long ago. The old friends are nearly speechless. Merry and Pippin enter, giddily jumping up and down on Frodo's bed, relating stories of great adventure while Sir James Galway's nuanced flute performance reveals how far the hobbits have come. Gimli enters, clapping his rough hands in joy. Familiar harmonies begin to reassemble in the flute and strings. Legolas arrives, his Elvish detachment betrayed by a warm smile.

Aragorn enters, and the Fellowship theme finds itself sitting comfortably in the brass, neither declamatory nor forceful. It does not flare up in a great sweep... it sighs. The Fellowship's adventures are behind it now. This is the music of placid victory. *Lento* strings sing the B phrase until a tender flute begins the Shire theme. Samwise Gamgee waits at the door. Frodo and Sam smile at each other.

The flute lifts upwards, strings joining it in a new Ring Quest theme: The Journey Back Again. A great crowd has gathered upon the top of Minas Tirith. Gondor Reborn soars freely. Upon the steps of the throne room, Gondor's new king awaits his crown. Gandalf lowers the Crown of Gondor onto its rightful heir, Aragorn, King Elessar. Gondor in Ascension is finally unveiled, its B phrase harkening to Aragorn's heroic path to the throne. The new King of Gondor turns to his people, and sings, "*Et Eärello Endorenna utúlien. Sinome maruvan ar Hildinyar tenn' Ambar-metta!*"

Aragorn turns to Legolas, who stands with a group of Elves, including... Arwen. Aragorn's love steps out from behind a white Gondorian pennant. Renée Fleming sings Arwen Revealed, the same melodic strain that first brought her into the story back in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Mixed chorus joins Fleming's solo voice as Arwen approaches. This is Elvish music, yet the addition of men's voices indicates something has changed. Arwen is shy, reluctant even. She has given up her immortality for this man, but does he still love her? Aragorn takes her chin in his hand and, as the strings reenter, kisses her passionately. She is to become his Queen.

The orchestra pursues a familiar stepwise motion, Sir James Galway's flute at its lead. Merry, Pippin, Sam and Frodo nod their heads reverently before the King. But Aragorn will not have it. He falls to his knees before the hobbits... and all of Gondor follows. The Shire theme rings out in a heroic beauty never before afforded hobbitkind. The worlds of Men, Elves and Dwarves are indebted to these four amazing creatures who, through their adherence to the tenets of friendship and love, were able to restore peace to Middle-earth. Spread throughout the full orchestra ensemble, Shore's simple tune blossoms, maturing into a gentle anthem for these tiny heroes.

But it is time for these heroes to return home. The Journey Back Again returns, now fully articulated, and the familiar vision of the map of Middle-earth takes the screen. We push westward, back through Fangorn Forest, across the Misty Mountains, through Bree, until, thirteen months after leaving it, the hobbits return to the Shire. The whistle sings the Pensive Setting of its friendly tune, just as it did before. The Shire is just as they left it, untouched by the hate and war these four have seen.



But the four hobbits, themselves, are not the same. The grass seems just as green, the Green Dragon's ale just as sweet, but the Shire seems smaller, quainter, less a world unto itself, more a quiet spot in a larger land. Dermot Crehan's fiddle sings the Shire's sweet melodies over the musette and strings, but they're laced with hints of the Fellowship theme. Silently the hobbits drink a toast to the pride, the pain and the deeds only they will ever know.

The Hobbit Outline figure quickens the pace via the pluck of *pizzicato* strings. The Shire's Rural Setting follows. Sam sees Rosie Cotton across the Green Dragon. Emboldened by experience (and perhaps the Dragon's ale), he starts toward her determinedly, leaving behind the shocked grins on his three friends' faces. Sam and Rosie are, soon after, married.

The somber chords of the Hymn Setting follow while Frodo narrates. His friends have all found happiness in the Shire, returning to their homes wiser, more experienced, but essentially unchanged. But Frodo *is* changed. “There are some things that time cannot mend. Some hurts that go too deep.”

5 – THE JOURNEY TO THE GREY HAVENS

Featuring Sir James Galway

Frodo is met by two visitors to the Shire, one a former resident, while whistle picks up an alternating two-note shape. Gandalf arrives in a horse-drawn cart and the Shire theme quietly heralds the return of Bilbo Baggins. Bilbo is to journey with the Elves upon the last ship departing Middle-earth. He wonders aloud if Frodo might show him that old Ring one last time before he leaves. Frodo manages a haunted stare. “I’m sorry, Uncle. I’m afraid I lost it.”

IN THE MAKING:

A small bit of music, meant for the reveal of old Bilbo, was dissolved out of the final sound mix.

Gandalf, Bilbo and the four hobbits of the Fellowship arrive at the Grey Havens, the Elves’ ancient port. They lead Bilbo by the arms as the Fellowship theme is softly recalled. A great ship sits empty before them, awaiting its passengers. Elrond, Galadriel and Celeborn stand on the dock to greet Gandalf and the hobbits. French horn echoes the alternating two-note figure before passing the line to double reeds. It is the music of departure, a last look back at the Ring Quest. Elrond guides Bilbo aboard. Galadriel smiles knowingly at the crowd, then, with her husband, boards the ship.

Gandalf turns to his friends. “Farewell, my brave hobbits.” The chorus hums the final statement of Gandalf’s Farewells, thus marking the first time the theme has been used literally. This time, Gandalf will not see the hobbits again. Wrapped in the soft chords, the hobbits cry.

Gandalf steps towards the boat, but halts. “It is time, Frodo.” Too hurt from the Ring, too changed to ever again know the Shire as home, Frodo, too, will journey to the Undying Lands with the Elves. It is his reward for his role in the War of the Ring. The Shire theme drifts warmly in its finality behind the four friends. The flute has now replaced the whistle entirely in this theme, its chipper simplicity lost to the passing Age. The flute recites the alternating pitches of the departure, and Frodo hands Sam his book. Sam must write the last pages. The four chords of the Shire’s Hymn Setting are hummed again by the chorus, and the hobbits cry tears of pain for their loss, tears of joy for their friends, and tears of release for the bygone Age and their changing lives.

Frodo and Sam embrace but, try as it may, the Shire theme cannot sound purely. The Hymn Setting turns around new bends, directed down unfamiliar avenues. The Third Age of the Shire is gone, its theme will sound no more. Oboe and whistle explore the departure music again. Frodo takes Gandalf’s hand and boards the boat.

Onboard, he pauses, then turns to his friends, beaming with an enthusiastic grin. His pain subsides; his renewal has begun. The Grey Havens theme sings in the celli once again, the hobbits’ former hope now rewarded. Frodo is at peace. Chorus hums open harmonies, as still and pure as the waters that will carry the Elves’ ship hence. The Grey Havens theme continues as the hobbits turn back and the ships pass into the West.

UNUSED CONCEPT:

An alternate full chorus composition, “Frodo’s Song” was written for Frodo’s departure from the Grey Havens, but was never used.

6 – ELANOR

Featuring Sir James Galway

Sam returns to the Shire, his young daughter, Elanor, ready to greet him before the yellow door to his hobbit hole. Frodo's voice is heard reading the inscription left in Bilbo's book. Frodo tells Sam that he must now care for his family. Rosie walks towards him, their infant son in her arms. The whistle begins a new hobbit theme. As Sam willingly releases his old life, the Shire is ready to enter its own Fourth Age. Sam draws his family near and smiles his humble, simple smile. "Well, I'm back."

With a rich swell of a D-major triad, Tolkien's story concludes as only such stories can...

"The End"



7 – DAYS OF THE RING

Featuring Annie Lennox performing "Into the West"

Strings stir up a final reading of the Journey Back Again, until trickling guitar instigates a new accompaniment line. Annie Lennox sings "[Into the West](#)," the vocal rendition of the Grey Havens theme. Somewhere, upon the outer waters of Middle-earth, Frodo's journey is ending... and just beginning.

After a suite of musical highlights from *The Return of the King*, the orchestra introduces a new line, a series of lilting *arpeggios* climbing high over lapping chords. This is Shore's nod to Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, the final opera in his *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, another Ring myth.

8 – BILBO'S SONG

If the end of "Days of the Ring" represents the journey to the Elves' Undying Lands, then "[Bilbo's Song](#)" marks the completion of the hobbits' tale. This, the most eloquent development of the hobbit music, allows the stepwise writing to bloom into an incredibly evolved, introspective melody. This song for boys chorus was the final music written for *The Lord of the Rings*. The film had been released theatrically, and its score honored with a spate of awards. When the music for the Extended Edition was recorded, this piece was added to the end credits suite—a final journey into Middle-earth for composer, Howard Shore.

TEXTS

THE SEDUCTION OF THE RING

Text by J. R. R. Tolkien

Quenya Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC ONE | TRACK ONE

I tuo, i macil...	The strength, the weapon...
Astaldaron mauri.	The needs of the valiant.
Nai corma macilya	Be the ring of your weapon
A lelyat túrenna!	Go to victory!

THE GREEN DRAGON

Text by Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens

FIRST HEARD: DISC ONE | TRACK SEVEN

You can search far and wide.
 You can drink the whole town dry.
 But you'll never find a beer so brown
 As the one we drink in our home town.
 But you'll never find a beer so brown
 As the one we drink in our home town.
 You can keep your fancy ales.
 You can drink them by the flagon.
 But the only brew for the brave and true
 Comes from the Green Dragon.

THE EVENING STAR

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC ONE | TRACK TWELVE

Ngil cennin eriel vi	I saw a star rise high in the
Menel aduial	Evening sky,
Glingant sui mîr	It hung like a jewel,
Síliel mae.	Softly shining.
Ngil cennin friel vi	I saw a star fade in the
Menel aduial	Evening sky,
Dûr, dûr i fuin	The dark was too deep and so light died,
Naenol mae.	Softly pining.
An i ú nathant	For what might have been,
An i naun ului	For what never was.
A chuîl, anann cuiannen	For a life, long lived
A meleth, perónen.	For a love half given.

THE DEATH OF BOROMIR

Text by Philippa Boyens

Quenya Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC ONE | TRACK THIRTEEN

I alda helda, I ehtele lína	The tree is bare, the fountain still.
Manna lelyalye Voromírë?	Whither goest thou Boromir?
Cánalya hlarula, la hirimmel	We heard your call but cannot find you.
Fuinë lanta Pelendoro nandesse	Darkness falls upon the vale of Pelennor
Sí massë I Anar?	Where now is the sun?

THE REVELATION OF THE RINGWRAITHS

Text by Philippa Boyens

Adûnaic Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC ONE | TRACK FOURTEEN

Nëbâbîtham Magânanê.	We renounce our Maker.
Nêtabdam dâur-ad.	We cleave to the darkness.
Nêpâm nêd abârat-aglar.	We take unto ourselves the power and the glory
Îdô Nidir nênakham	Behold! We are the Nine
Bârín Katharâd	The Lords of Unending Life.

THE RETREAT FROM OSGILIATH

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK ONE

Revail vyrn dan minuial	Black wings against a pale morning
ú galad, ú vin anor hen	There is no more light, not in this sun
Cano an dregad	Call the retreat
ú natha ored	There will be no warning
Gwanwen ost in giliath	The citadel of the stars is gone
Dannen Osgiliath	Osgiliath is fallen.

THE WHITE RIDER

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK ONE

Mennen nored dîn	Their race was over;
Gwanwen i'ûr bân	All courage gone.
Sílant calad Dûn	A light shone in the west -
Tollen Rochon 'Lân.	The White Rider had come.

THE LAST SON

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

Adapted by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK FOUR

Boe le henio	You must understand.
E si car a thad yn	He does the duty of two sons now.
Ane ah a phen	For himself; and for the One
I ú athelitha	who will not return.

THE EDGE OF NIGHT

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

Adapted by Philippa Boyens

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK FOUR

Home is behind.
 The world ahead.
 And there are many paths to tread
 Thru shadow to the edge of night
 Until the stars are all alight
 Mist and shadows, cloud and shade.
 All shall fade.
 All shall fade.

THE DIMHOLT ROAD

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK SIX

Go vegil tolo hí	Come armed,
Egor íriel firi	or prepared to die.
'Ni men hen ú veth 'war.	There is no other end to this road.

THE BLADE THAT WAS BROKEN

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK SIX

Achannen, andaminnen	Reforged, remade
Aeg a celair	Sharp and bright
Naur'wain	A new fire
An ardhon'wain	For a new world
Dan ma istach han maetho?	But you can still feel it, can't you?
Nu lach?	Beneath the flame?
I'was dín	The stain of it.
Sereg in iorath	The blood of the old
I hautha den na daew	That seeped into the hilt.
Lungas e ndaged	The weight of killing,
I hardhant i chathol.	That tempered the blade.
Ortho i vegil Elessar	Take up the sword, Elessar
Rango in gyrth	Embrace the dead,
An le rangatha gurth	For death shall yet embrace you.

ANDÚRIL

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

Adapted by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK SEVEN

Elo! Andúril;	Behold! Anduril;
Lach en Annún	Flame of the West.
I chathol asgannen	The blade that was broken,
Ad echannen	Has been remade!

THE WAY IS SHUT

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK NINE

Hollen i ven	The way is shut.
In gyrth han agorer	It was made by those who are dead
A han beriar in gyrth	And the Dead keep it.
Hollen i ven	The way is shut.

THE NAZGÛL

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC TWO | TRACK TWELVE

Ristais dúath	Shreds of shadow
Nerchennin o chuil	Torn from life
Coll am	Borne aloft
Na waewath goeyl	By fell winds.
Tellin i Neder	The Nine have come.
Gurth renia.	Death has taken wing.
Meditha han phan,	He will eat it all,
Meditha ardhon.	Eat all the world.

ON THE FIELDS OF PELENNOR

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

Adapted by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC THREE | TRACK THREE

Edrochant e	Forth he rode
na nagor,	In to battle.
Ed nan gurth.	Forth in to death.
A e gladhant	And he laughed.
An e naun ad neth	For he was young again.
A naun aran	And he was King.
Hir gwaith beleg.	The Lord of a great people.
Elo!	And lo!
Sui orthant vegil ín	Even as raised his sword
Vi'las beleg	In great joy,
Ortholl gurth.	Death came on.
Anann si lostar	Long now they sleep
Nu lae vi Ngondor	Under grass in Gondor.
Sí lostar na hír veleg	Sleep now by the great river,
Mithren sui nîr, thiliol celebren	Grey as tears, gleaming silver,
Ta geliant caran,	Red then it rolled,
Púrinnen na hereg	Dyed with their blood.
Lachant ned annûn	Flamed at sunset;
Úrianner i eryd	The mountains burned;
Sui ros garan dannant	As red dew fell
Or pheli Pelennor	On the fields of Pelennor.

ANGMAR

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien and Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC THREE | TRACK NINE

Dollost - dîr cuiol You fool - no living man
 ú-ar nin degi Can kill me!

Le echelithar aen You will be borne away
 Athar fuin ban Beyond all darkness;
 Rhaw lín mannen Your flesh devoured,
 Ind tharn lín Your shriveled mind
 Lanc na chen be-thobas Left naked to the lidless eye.

Anant i vaethor ú-ritha But still the soldier did not move.
 Hên Rohan Child of Rohan,
 Fim sui anghathel Slender as a steel-blade,
 Bain a goeol. Fair yet terrible.

Na vedui istant Too late he knew,
 Na vedui cenn Too late saw,
 Dîr ú-naun hon... This was no man.
 Vess e tiriánt. He looked upon a woman.

DEATH OF A KING

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

Old English Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC THREE | TRACK TEN

Of dreccunga, of dimnesse tó dægæs úþgange	Out of doubt, out of dark, to the days rising
Hé singende rád in sunnan, sweord bregðende	He rode singing in the sun, sword unsheathing.
Hé hyht eft onaelede and in hyhte geendode	Hope he rekindled, and in hope ended;
Ofer endunga, ofer ege, ofer orlæge úþ áhafen	Over death, over dread, over doom lifted
Of lyre, of lífe, tó langum wuldre.	Out of loss, out of life, unto long glory.

ARWEN'S SONG

Text by Fran Walsh

FIRST HEARD: DISC THREE | TRACK ELEVEN

With a sigh you turn away
 With a deepening heart no more words to say
 You will find that the world has changed forever

And the trees are now turning from green to gold
 And the sun is now fading
 I wish I could hold you closer

THE GRACE OF THE VALAR known as THE BREATH OF LIFE

Text by Fran Walsh

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC THREE | TRACK THIRTEEN

Immen dúath caeda	Shadow lies between us
Sui tollech, tami gwannathach omen	as you came, so you shall leave from us
Lû ah alagos gwinnatha bain	Time and storm shall scatter all things
Boe naer gwannathach, annant uich ben-estel	Sorrowing you must go, and yet you are not without hope
An uich gwennen na ringyrn e-mbar han	For you are not bound to the circles of this world
Uich gwennen na 'wanath a na dhín.	You are not bound to loss and to silence

THE ARGUMENT

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC THREE | TRACK FIFTEEN

Caedo, losto. Ú-erin davo.	Lie down, sleep. I cannot yield.
Amman harthach? Anim únad.	Why do you still hope? I have nothing else.
Le tûg nach. O hon ú-wannathon.	You are a fool. I will not leave him.
Ú-moe le anno nad. Ónen a hon beth nín.	You owe him nothing. I gave him my word.
Gurth han ristatha. Ta han narcho Gurth.	Death will break it. Then let Death break it.
Gar vethed e-chúnen, go hon bedithon na meth.	He has the last of my heart. I will go with him to the end.

FOR FRODO

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC THREE | TRACK SIXTEEN

Ae na guil nín egor na ngurth nín	If by my life or death
Gerin le beriad	I can protect you,
Le beriathon	I will.
Le annon vegil nín	I give you my sword
Cyll e-Gorv	Ringbearer,
Le annon beth nín	I give you my word,
Ú-erir aen han risto	It cannot be broken.
Ú-erir aen han presto	Nor turned aside,
Rúvo i rym	Let the horns sound,
I aur hen ú bant!	This day is not done!
Isto Mordor han:	Let Mordor know this:
Elessar! Elessar!	Elessar! Elessar!
Tellin i Chîr Gondor!	The Lords of Gondor have come!

THE EAGLES

Text by J. R. R. Tolkien and Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC THREE | TRACK SIXTEEN

Orthannen im vi ôl	In a dream I was lifted up.
Coll e dû	Borne from the darkness
Or hiriath naur	Above rivers of fire.
Na rovail mae sui'waew	On wings soft as the wind.
Man prestant i ardhon?	What's happened to the world?
Cerithar aen illaid dim úthenin?	Is everything sad going to come untrue?

THE MOUNTAIN OF FIRE

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC FOUR | TRACK ONE

Nu dalav	Beneath the ground
Úrui tuiannen na ruith	Swollen hot with anger
Leithia Orodruin oe ín phan.	Orodruin releases all its ruin.
Ristannen i geven,	Earth rips asunder
Danna eliad morn.	Black rain falls.
Sí, na vethed	Here at the end;
Meth i naid bain	The end of all things.
I wilith úria	The air is aflame,
I ardhon ban lacha!	All the world is on fire!

DON'T LET GO

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC FOUR | TRACK TWO

Anírach únad	You want nothing more
Egor gurth hen	Than this death.
Han cenin vi chen lín	I see it in your eye.
Egor ú-erin le devi	But I cannot let you
Tellin men achae	We have come too far
Brennin men anann	We have held on too long.
Rago! Ú-erich leithio,	Reach! You cannot let go,
Ú-erich o nin gwanno.	You cannot leave me.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RING

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC FOUR | TRACK TWO

Mi naurath Orodruin	Into the fires of Orodruin
Boe hedi i Vín	The One must be cast;
Han i vangad i moe ben bango	This the price, that must be paid,
Sin eriol natha túr in úgarnen	Only thus its power will be undone,
Sin eriol ûm beleg úgannen	Only thus, a great evil, unmade.

Ú cilion 'war.	There is no other choice.
Ú men 'war.	There is no other way.
Boe min mebi.	One of you must take it,
Boe min bango.	One of you must pay.

NOT ONCE, NOT EVER

Text by Philippa Boyens

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC FOUR | TRACK TWO

Dannen le	You have fallen.
A ú-erin le regi	And I cannot reach you.
Rang ail le iestannen	Every step I willed you on,
Lû ail le tegin na hen.	Every moment I lead you to this.
Gwannach o innen ului	You never left my mind,
Ú lû erui, ului.	Not once, not ever.

ARAGORN'S CORONATION

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

FIRST HEARD: DISC FOUR | TRACK FOUR

Et Eärello Endoreнна utúlien.	Out of the Great Sea to Middle-Earth I am come.
Sinome maruvan ar Hildinyar tenn' Ambar-metta!	In this place will I abide, and my heirs, unto the ending of the world.

THE SONG OF LÚTHIEN [EXCERPT]

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC FOUR | TRACK FOUR

Tinúviel elvanui	Tinúviel the elven fair,
Elleth alfirin edhelhael	Immortal maiden elven-wise,
O hon ring finnil fuinui	About him cast her shadowy hair.
A renc gelebrin thiliol	And arms like silver glimmering.

INTO THE WEST

Words and Music by Fran Walsh, Howard Shore, Annie Lennox

FIRST HEARD: DISC FOUR | TRACK SEVEN

Lay down
Your sweet and weary head
Night is falling
You have come to journey's end

Sleep now
Dream—of the ones who came before
They are calling
From across a distant shore

Why do you weep?
What are these tears upon your face?
Soon you will see
All of your fears will pass away

Safe in my arms
You're only sleeping

What can you see
On the horizon?
Why do the white gulls call?

Across the sea
A pale moon rises
The ships have come
To carry you home

And all will turn to silver glass
A light on the water
All souls pass

Hope fades
Into the world of night
Through shadows falling
Out of memory and time

Don't say
We have come now to the end
White shores are calling
You and I will meet again

And you'll be here in my arm
Just sleeping

What can you see
On the horizon?
Why do the white gulls call?

Across the sea
A pale moon rises
The ships have come
To carry you home

And all will turn to silver glass
A light on the water
Grey ships pass
Into the West

BILBO'S SONG

Text by J.R.R. Tolkien

Sindarin Translation by David Salo

FIRST HEARD: DISC FOUR | TRACK EIGHT

Im nauthon nan naur nu ngilith O naid i gennin im O lyth e-barth a gwilwilith Ne laer i vanner lim	I sit beside the fire and think of all that I have seen, of meadow-flowers and butterflies in summers that have been;
O lhiath a golas malen Ne daint i lais gwennin Na chith ah anor celebren A gwaewath or find nin	Of yellow leaves and gossamer in autumns that there were, with morning mist and silver sun and wind upon my hair.
Im nauthon nan naur vi vuil Maven natha i ardhon Ias tol i riw ben ethuil Ir im u-genithon	I sit beside the fire and think of how the world will be when winter comes without a spring that I shall ever see.
An nadath laew nar annan I ulu im cennin Vin eryn ned ethuil ban Nar ennas laegath gwin.	For still there are so many things that I have never seen: in every wood in every spring there is a different green.
Im hevin nan naur a nauthon O gwaith nedin lu iaur A gwaith i cenitha ardhon Ir istathon u aur.	I sit beside the fire and think of people long ago, and people who will see a world that I shall never know.
Dan iar im nan naur peliel Oh aurath ioer nauthon Laston a thail etheliel A lemmaid nan annon.	But all the while I sit and think of times there were before, I listen for returning feet and voices at the door.

PERFORMERS

VOCALISTS

Returning:

THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOOL SCHOLA

Listening Example: Disc One | Track One | 2:53

The London Oratory School Schola was established in 1996 as the top boys chorus at the prestigious London Oratory School. The Schola sings as part of the school's weekly Mass services and has appeared in numerous film scores including Danny Elfman's *Sleepy Hollow*, John Williams' *Harry Potter* scores, and of course, Howard Shore's *The Lord of the Rings*. Although used throughout the scores, the boys become very closely associated with the forces of Nature and Shore's Seduction of the Ring theme.

Returning:

THE LONDON VOICES

Listening Example: Disc One | Track Twelve | 0:00

The singers of The London Voices are hand picked for each engagement they attend. The choir has no fixed membership so that singers who excel at specific styles can be assigned the ideal projects. Under the direction of Terry Edwards, London Voices have performed a wide array of film and concert works around the globe, including standard repertoire of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Stravinsky and newer works by John Adams, Luciano Berio and Sir Michael Tippett.

Terry Edwards recalls, "My memories of the sessions are pretty vivid as I conducted all of the choral ones for the second and third films. Howard was very involved in composing new and/or changing material. We tended to record material to play him down the line during the first hour of each session. He had an unfailing ability to pick out any imperfections if there were any, and to suggest subtle changes to our performance or to his composition which would affect, in a magical way, what was heard so that it more closely matched the visions on the screen. I was considerably impressed with his ability to transfer his thoughts from his composition to our performance so that he would give us one hundred percent of his concentration when we needed it, despite the other pressures and events that must have been overwhelming him at that time."

Debuting:

RENÉE FLEMING

Listening Example: Disc One | Track Twelve | 0:00

Renée Fleming is one of the most renowned and respected operatic sopranos of modern times. In her wide-reaching career she has championed jazz standards and both traditional and modern opera, premiering works for John Corigliano (*The Ghosts of Versailles*) and André Previn (*A Streetcar Named Desire*).

Debuting:

SIR JAMES GALWAY

Listening Example: Disc One | Track One | 0:49

Sir James Galway served as principal flute of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Herbert von Karajan from 1969 to 1975, at which point he embarked on a successful career as a solo artist. His appearance in *The Return of the King* represents the maturation of the hobbits' folk instruments as the whistles associated with their culture gradually give way to the more complex nuanced sounds of the classical flute. Galway performs on a solid gold flute, which he had custom built.

Debuting:

ANNIE LENNOX

Listening Example: Disc Four | Track Seven | 0:52

Annie Lennox has had a wide and varied career as a performer, though her work as a solo artist and as a member of the band Eurythmics is perhaps most recognized by the public. She sings "Into the West" at the end of *The Return of the King*, a role Howard Shore thought she was musically appropriate for, given her interpretive skills and resemblance to the character Galadriel.

Debuting:

SISSEL

Listening Example: Disc Three | Track Thirteen | 3:15

Sissel took a circuitous route into the music of Middle-earth. She was originally engaged to perform the solo soprano part in select performances of *The Lord of the Rings Symphony: Six Movements for Orchestra and Chorus*, then was subsequently asked to perform “Asëa Aranion” for the Extended DVD Edition of *The Return of the King*.

BEN DEL MAESTRO

Listening Example: Disc Two | Track One | 7:50

A member of the London Oratory School Schola, Ben Del Maestro sings all the boy soprano solos in *The Return of the King*.

CAST PERFORMERS

BILLY BOYD

DOMINIC MONAGHAN

VIGGO MORTENSEN

LIV TYLER

INSTRUMENTALISTS

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Howard Shore’s relationship with the London Philharmonic Orchestra dates back to 1986 and his score to *The Fly*. Today that relationship has blossomed into a gratifyingly personal one, both for composer and orchestra. “I love them because they’re a concert orchestra, but they’re very much a great opera orchestra. They’ve been playing Glyndebourne every summer for about 30 years. Being in a pit accompanying opera is so much like what I’m trying to do with film music, and they understand that well. That’s the perfect combination for film music, so it seemed obvious that they should do *The Lord of the Rings*. The LPO has fantastic instrumentalists. I know them so well. I know Sue Bohling, the *cor anglais* player, and how great she will sound playing a particular piece. I know Paul Beniston, the first trumpet player, and the first flute player and principal violin. I’ve absorbed, from working with them so many years, their beautiful sounds.” Sue Bohling returns the compliment. “The first film I worked on with Shore was *The Yards*, which I remember as if it were yesterday. There was a lot to do and it had the most beautiful title melody... for *cor anglais*! It’s always a thrill to play someone’s composition when they know how to write for the instrument. He has a natural feel for what the *c.a.* does best. He writes with such a lyrical quality, and in the right range of the instrument for it to sing.”

Principal cellist Bob Truman echoes this praise for detail. “A lot of thought has gone into it. All his music is very well written. He understands the nature of the instruments and, from my perspective as a cellist, he writes very, very well. It’s all in singing registers. He understands harmonics and things like that. He uses tone clusters where we all play different rhythms and they’re fascinating. It’s very interesting the way he writes strange sequences of clusters and then has a melody that fits in.” Concertmaster Pieter Schoeman continues, “Howard would write the most complex *divisi*. He creates a cluster of sound where all the violins start on the same note and then start dividing, spreading into a chord and finally forming a cluster so thick you would need a chainsaw to cut through it. The Concertmaster has to organize this kind of *divisi* in such a way that you have an equal number of violins on each note as the chord spreads. I finally worked out a certain method, which we ended up using systematically since we needed it quite often. We still affectionately refer to this technique as the ‘Howard *Divisi*.’”

Although LPO is primarily a concert hall orchestra, they’ve played for a great number of film scores. Still, Stewart McIlwham, LPO’s principal piccolo, will always remember the orchestra’s participation in this monumental production. “*The Lord of the Rings* project is probably the biggest film score that the LPO will ever take part in. Just in the sheer numbers—in the three films, plus the extra DVD music you are getting close to 200 three-hour sessions. Having worked with John Williams on *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* it was interesting to compare how Howard Shore approached the creation of this score. With Williams all the

music was completed, orchestrated and ready to be put down in a relatively short time. With *The Lord of the Rings*, director Peter Jackson was on hand at most of the sessions, so he and Howard worked in a totally different way. We would record a four or five minute piece, then they would listen to it with the movie. Sometimes we would spend the rest of the session subtly refining just this one cue. Howard would change the orchestration, adding a different instrument here, sometimes removing a whole violin section there.

“But we were taking part in one of the greatest movie projects ever. I sometimes wondered if the people of Watford [where the scores were largely recorded] ever knew what was going on at the end of their high street, or if they would have believed you had you told them! Sometimes on those long days it wasn't so easy to see that because the process could be slow, but between Peter Jackson and Howard Shore they created a masterpiece. That is the genius of the two men.”

Principal trumpet Paul Beniston continues, “*The Lord of the Rings* project totally dwarfed any other film project I have been involved in, or indeed heard of and I have been in the LPO for almost 10 years.” Bohling sums up the orchestra's feeling towards composer and project. “He's a bit of a master, isn't he? There's nothing like this, and there won't be anything. The score was like going on a long journey, like playing one long phrase. Howard's writing is very clear, we know what he wants and where he wants to take it and he knows what we can do.”

DERMOT CREHAN

Hardanger Fiddle, Double Fiddle

EDWARD CERVENKA

Cimbalom

SYLVIA HALLETT

Sarangi

Sylvia Hallett is a multi-instrumentalist, composer and improviser who plays, from time to time, in international festivals. She has worked extensively for theatre and has toured the world with the RSC and Young Vic Company. She has been playing the sarangi for eight years, studying Indian music with Nicolas Magriel.

JAN HENDRICKSE

Rhaita, Low Whistle

ULRICH HERKENHOFF

Pan Flute

EDWARD HESSION

Musette

JEAN KELLY

Celtic Harp

GREG KNOWLES

Cimbalom

“I came to London from Preston in 1978-85 to work for Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' contemporary chamber group, The Fires of London. I became involved in the London studio scene as percussionist and composer working on movie scores (*Spy Game*, *Red Violin*) and recording with artists as diverse as Nigel Kennedy and Primal Scream.”

STUART MCILWHAM

Wood Flute

JOHN PARRICELLI

Six-String Guitar, Twelve-String Guitar

SONIA SLANY

Monochord

GILLIAN TINGAY

Celtic Harp

“For the recording of the DVD, I had been asked to bring a clàrsach —the rather temperamental Gaelic harp—instead of the six-foot tall concert harp that I normally use. I arrived at the studio expecting to be playing with my usual session orchestra but instead was asked to take myself and my little harp into a rather compact recording box where I was joined by the other musicians. Fortunately, they were not an orchestra but five very jovial and talkative Irishmen. Besides being brilliant musicians, they were very witty and so the time that I spent cooped up in a confined space with the five of them was not only a unique musical experience, but also great fun!”

MIKE TAYLOR

Whistle

As a member of the world music combo, Incantation, Mike Taylor has performed on film scores such as Ennio Morricone’s *The Mission*, James Horner’s *Willow* and Howard Shore’s *Gangs of New York*. Taylor fondly remembers Shore’s never-ending quest to find the perfect musical voice for Middle-earth when, during the recording sessions, the composer turned to him and asked, “Mike, do you think the hobbits actually played whistles?” I replied, “Howard, what do you think?” He replied, “Probably, but never mind. Just play the tune and make me weep!”

ROBERT WHITE

Bodhrán

 INSTRUMENTS **HOBBITON**

Returning:

BODHRÁN

Listening Example: Disc Four | Track Four | 8:40

The bodhrán (*Bough-rawn*) is just one of an ancient family of frame drums that consist of a stretched hide over a wooden shell. Bodhrán drums are believed to have originated in Ireland (or possibly emigrated there via the Roman Empire or Arabic trade routes), and derived their name from a Gaelic description of the sound, roughly translated as “thundered.” With the hobbits of the Fellowship dispersed around Middle-earth, the bodhrán is no longer restricted to the Shire—or even the hobbits. It appears throughout the score now as a cosmopolitan element of the world.

Returning / Debuting:

WHISTLE / LOW WHISTLE

Listening Example: Disc One | Track Three | 1:32

The Irish whistle (also known as the penny whistle, vertical flute, flageolet, stáin or feadóg) may be the oldest instrument in Celtic music. Originally carved from bone, today’s whistles are generally made of wood or metal.

Returning:

DULCIMER

Listening Example: Disc Four | Track Four | 9:41

Returning:

CELTIC HARP

Listening Example: Disc Four | Track Four | 9:41

Returning:

MUSETTE

Listening Example: Disc Four | Track Four | 9:41

Returning:

MANDOLIN

Listening Example: Disc Four | Track Four | 9:41

Returning:

GUITAR

Listening Example: Disc Four | Track Seven | 0:41

Returning:

CELESTA

Listening Example: Disc Four | Track Four | 9:41

GOLLUM

CIMBALOM

Listening Example: Disc One | Track Eight | 0:00

Just as Gollum was once nearly a hobbit, the cimbalom was once nearly a standard hammered dulcimer. Developed in the Nineteenth Century, the cimbalom is an elaborate Hungarian variant on the dulcimer—with nearly twice the range and a chromatic tuning. Like the dulcimer, the strings of the cimbalom are struck with small hammers that create a tactile, twitchy sound that matches the character of Gollum's Menace theme.

THE ELVES

Returning:

MONOCHORD

Listening Example: Disc Two | Track Thirteen | 8:20

The monochord's history is as mysterious as its many uses. The instrument itself consists of a large wooden box over which a single string is held in place by pegs. An adjustable bridge allows the monochord to shift pitch while the performer either plucks or bows the string. Monochords have been used as scientific instruments (Pythagoras used its harmonic vibrations to study ratios), astronomy (Ptolemy), philosophy (Kepler's "Harmony of the Spheres"), musical teachings (Guido of Arezzo's "Guidonian Hand"), and for the curative properties of its vibrations. In Middle-earth, our mystical monochord is used for the Elves of Lothlórien, where it provides a low droning melancholy over which the melody flows. The monochord used for this recording had 50 strings strung across the bridge.

Returning:

SARANGI

Listening Example: Disc Two | Track Thirteen | 8:20

The sarangi, a bowed string instrument common to Indian classical music, is constructed from a single block of wood, covered in parchment and generally strung with three or four gut strings under which 35 to 40 resonating strings run.

GONDOR

Pan flute and wood flute were each used to represent Gondor in Middle-earth because of their storied histories in the real world. These wind instruments constitute some of the earliest musical devices on record, and so Shore transplanted them to Middle-earth to represent Gondor, the most ancient and revered kingdom of Men. Here the pan flute represents Faramir's sensitivity and suffering while the wood flute introduces his developing relationship with Éowyn.

Debuting:

PAN FLUTE

Listening Example: Disc Two | Track Three | 2:20

Debuting:

WOOD FLUTE

Listening Example: Disc Three | Track Thirteen | 1:06

ROHAN

J.R.R. Tolkien based Rohan's society on the Northern European lands of the Nordic peoples. These cultures (both Middle- and real earth) were founded upon simple ideals: the relationship between men and the land, men and animals, pride, power, self-reliance. Reflecting these values, Shore set the music of Rohan in the same thickset brass style as the other music for the World of Men, but intermixed with solo strings that stress a rural type of sophistication.

Returning:

HARDANGER FIDDLE

Listening Example: Disc One | Track Five | 1:02

Although the composer was previously aware of many of the rare instruments in *The Lord of the Rings'* collection, Shore had never come across the Hardanger fiddle before he began studying Nordic music as a basis for Rohan. "It was part of the research for *The Two Towers*, looking towards Northern European sounds and thinking about the Viking, Nordic culture." Often referred to as the national instrument of Norway, the Hardanger fiddle was thought to have been invented in the mid-1600s. The tone is bracing and emphatic, but moderate at the same time. In Norwegian culture the instrument was used to relate history and lore, and it functions much the same in the music of Rohan. "The fiddle creates a nice counterpoint to the wooden flutes and the whistle in the other cultures." When the Rohan culture is introduced, it is proud but sorrowful—a once great civilization beset by a failing king and unending assaults. Here the Hardanger underlines a brittleness within the culture.

Debuting:

DOUBLE FIDDLE

Listening Example: Disc Two | Track Eight | 0:40

The double fiddle was specifically created for the score to *The Return of the King*. The instrument, which essentially doubles the standard fiddle's four strings into four pairs of strings (eight total), is used when Aragorn tells Éowyn that there will never be love between them, and was performed by Dermot Crehan. "A friend of mine's a fiddle maker, Bob Greenbridge," Crehan recalls. "I came up with the idea and said, 'Please do this for me. I think it might work—and it might be a disaster.' He said, 'You must be absolutely mad.' I said, 'Yes, I am!'"

THE ORCS

Returning:

TAIKO DRUM

Listening Example: Disc Three | Track One | 0:23

These ancient drums, which have been used in Japanese music for over a millennium, exist in four basic sizes. The rich, rumbling tone of the drum was associated with the power of the gods in traditional Japanese culture, and the drum was used on the battlefield to strike fear into the hearts of enemies. It serves much the same purpose in the music of the Orcs where its pounding, unforgiving tone represents their brutal force.

MORDOR

Returning:

RHAITA

Listening Example: Disc One | Track Ten | 1:09

A long time fan of Ornette Coleman, Shore discovered the rhaita on the innovative saxophonist's 1973 album, *Dancing in Your Head*. The rhaita, an African double reed instrument not unlike the oboe, represents the cultures of Mordor in *The Lord of the Rings*. It is especially associated with the Evil of the Ring theme, which it calls out like a twisted war horn.

THE ARMY OF THE DEAD

Debuting:

HANGING TIBETAN GONGS

Listening Example: Disc Two | Track Eleven | 1:11

A large assortment of these hanging metal plates represents the muted clang of long-ago war behind the ghostly men's chorus of the Army of the Dead. Though the gong is now a common member of the percussion family, it was first introduced to the orchestra by composer, François Joseph Gossec, who used it, appropriately enough, in a funeral march.

❧ SPECIAL CREDITS ❧

PLAN 9 [Janet Roddick, David Donaldson, Stephen Roche and David Long]

Plan 9 first collaborated with Peter Jackson on 1995's *Forgotten Silver*. In *The Lord of the Rings* films, they specialized in diegetic, or on-screen music, including Merry and Pippin's ode to "The Green Dragon."

Additional information available in the complete book *The Music of the Lord of the Rings Films*.

Motion Picture Artwork & Photography ©2003, 2007 New Line Productions, Inc.

Original text Copyright © 2007 by Doug Adams