

Reverse Engineering Instrumental Cues

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Taxi Road Rally 2017
(Fair use – educational only)

DRAMEDY



- Dramedy is *not* Cartoony
- Pizzicato strings
- Pizzicato strings
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- Mischief, light, sneaky
- AABA
- 1, 4, 5 progression
- Playful piano melody
- Counterpoint

REVERSE ENGINEERING: GAGA



LEARNING FROM THE MASTERS

- Don't infringe on a © (ie: don't release copies)
- This is a LEARNING TOOL
- Practice LISTENING
- What is the bpm? – use it
- What are the drums doing? – do it
- What is the bass doing? – do it
- What are all the other instr. doing? – do it
- What is the chord structure? – alter it slightly
- What are the FX used on each instrument?
- How is the track mixed? – do that to your cue

**Doing this will teach you how to produce
Cool and useable stuff...**

“I HATE RULES!!!”



PARAMETERS

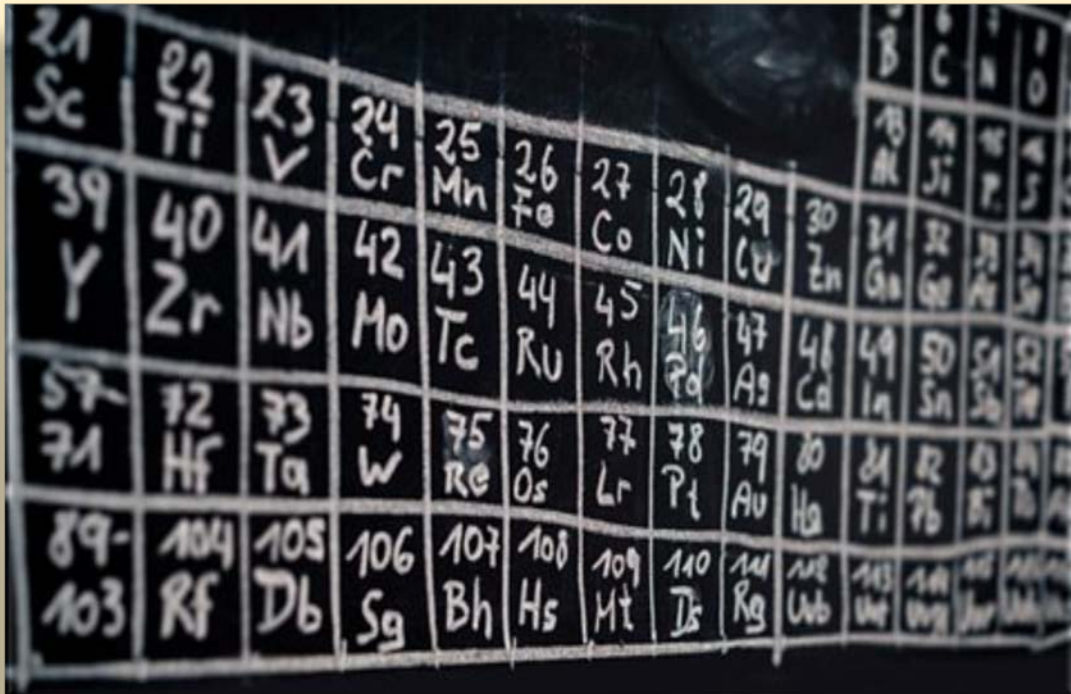
- Time Signature (4/4, 3/4, 6/6)
- 12 note Chromatic scale
- Note values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth, etc...)
- 26 letter alphabet
- Language vernacular (common words, phrases)
- Every instrument has parameters
- Your voice has parameters
- Gravity, sunlight, midnight – parameters
- Fashion parameters (or so my wife tells me)

PARAMETERS ARE COOL

PICK A TARGET

GO HIT IT

Identifying elements



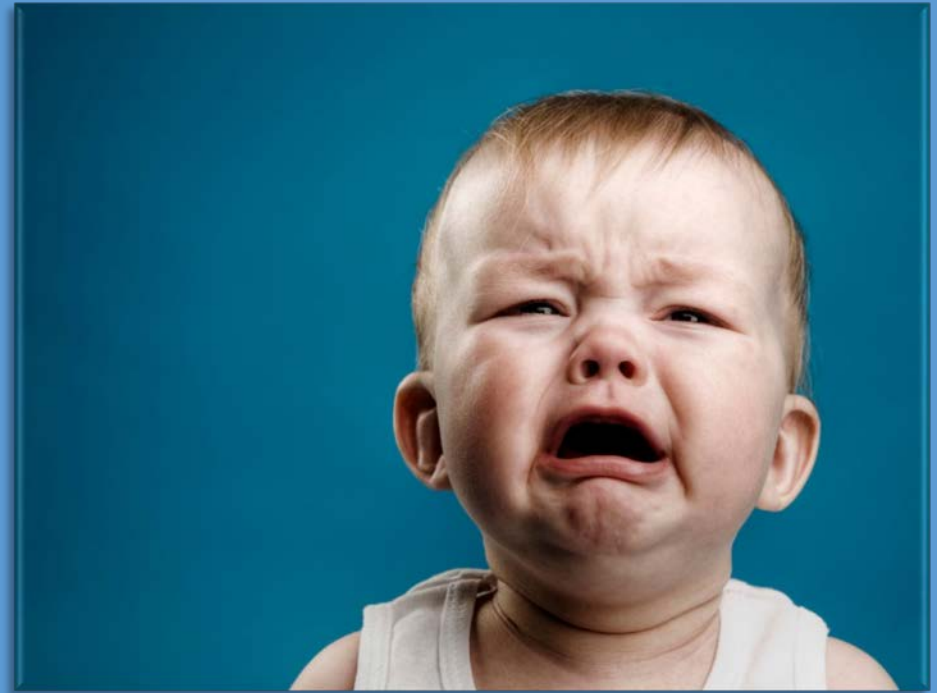
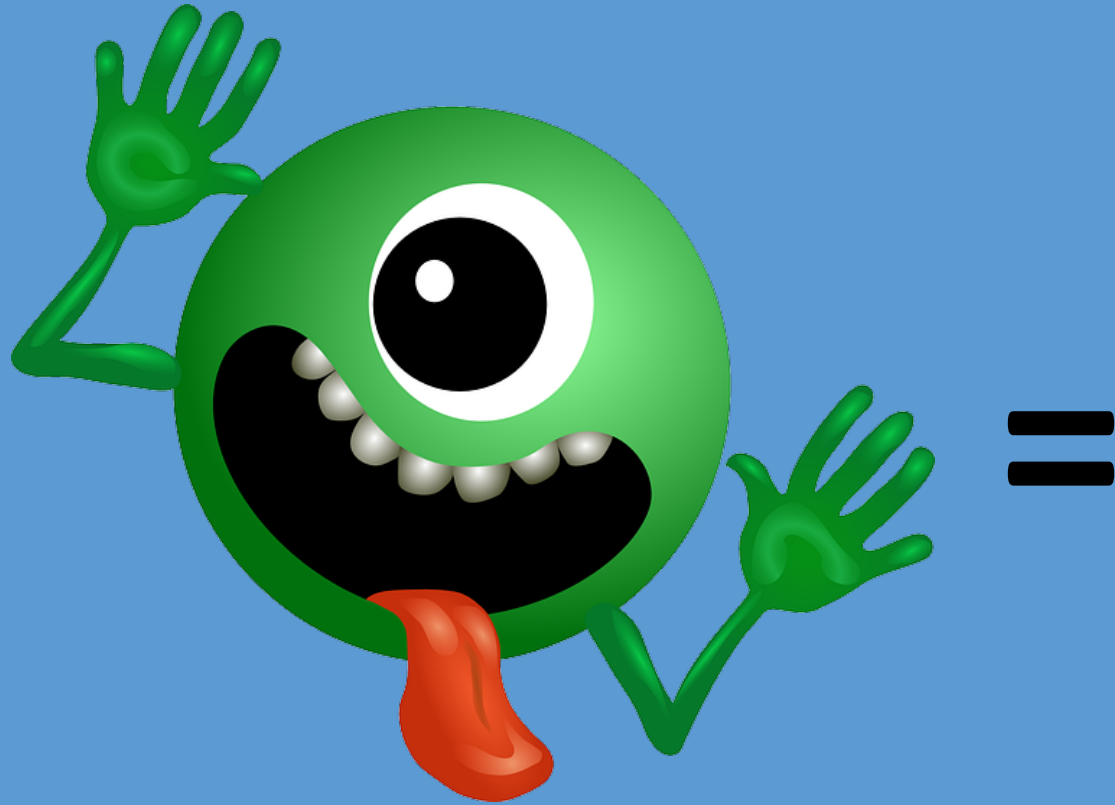
21 Sc	22 Ti	23 V	24 Cr	25 Mn	26 Fe	27 Co	28 Ni	29 Cu	30 Zn	31 Ga	32 Ge	33 As	34 Se	35 Br	36 Kr
39 Y	40 Zr	41 Nb	42 Mo	43 Tc	44 Ru	45 Rh	46 Pd	47 Ag	48 Cd	49 In	50 Sn	51 Sb	52 Te	53 I	54 Xe
57 La	58 Ce	59 Pr	60 Nd	61 Pm	62 Sm	63 Eu	64 Gd	65 Tb	66 Dy	67 Ho	68 Er	69 Tm	70 Yb	71 Lu	72 Hf
73 Ta	74 W	75 Re	76 Os	77 Ir	78 Pt	79 Au	80 Hg	81 Tl	82 Pb	83 Bi	84 Po	85 At	86 Rn	87 Fr	88 Ra
89 Ac	90 Th	91 Pa	92 U	93 Np	94 Pu	95 Am	96 Cm	97 Bk	98 Cf	99 Es	100 Fm	101 Md	102 No	103 Lr	104 Rf
105 Db	106 Sg	107 Bh	108 Hs	109 Mt	110 Ds	111 Rg	112 Uub	113 Uut	114 Uuq	115 Uup	116 Uuh	117 Uus	118 Uuo	119 Uu	120 Uu

- Up-tempo shuffle (ZZ Top, Molly Hatchet)
- Sticks (ZZ Top)
- Crunchy Guitars (ZZ Top, Molly Hatchet)
- Guitar riff theme (Both)
- Blues Harp (Molly Hatchet)
- Rockin' Drum kit (ZZ Top, Molly hatchet)
- Driving Bass guitar (ZZ Top, Molly Hatchet)
- Fairly "Dry" Reverb (ZZ Top, Molly Hatchet)
- Sound like a BAND (ZZ Top, Molly Hatchet)
- B-3 Organ (other *Southern Rock*)
- DO WHAT THEY DO

IT'S NOT THE GEAR – IT'S THE EAR

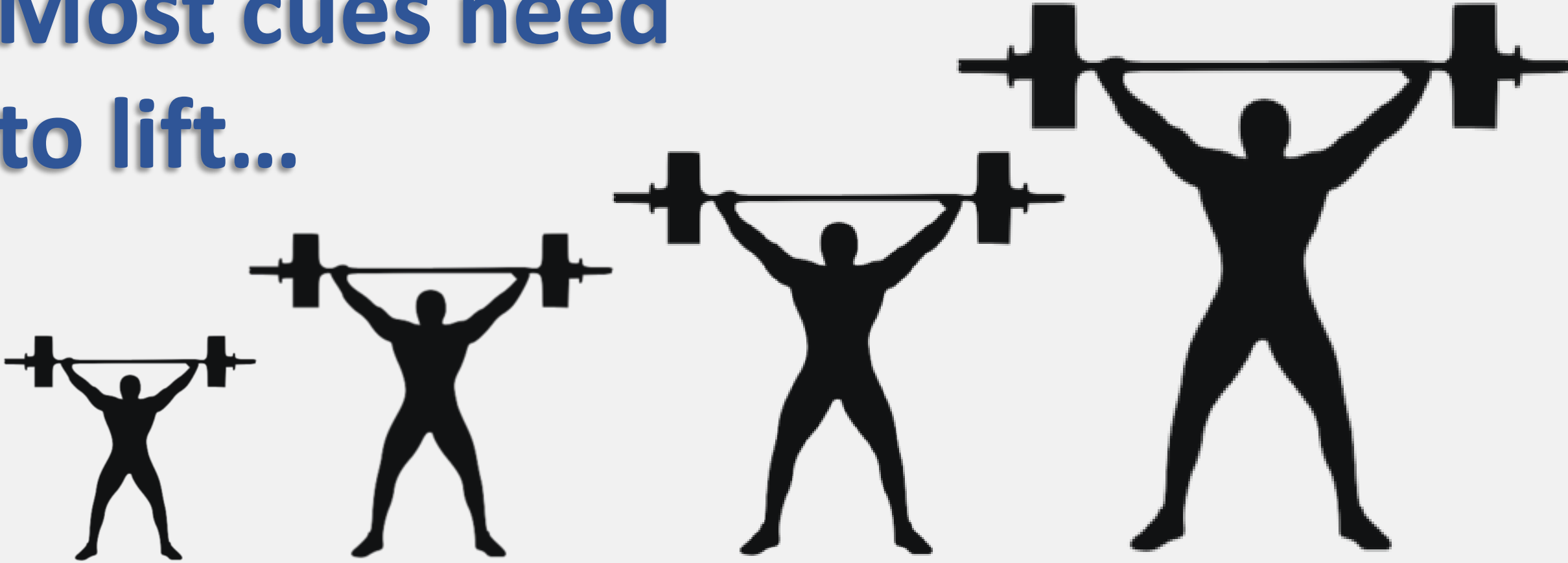
- Drums (EZ Drummer and Sampletank)
- Bass (SampleTank 2 – P-Bass)
- Guitars (Strat through POD)
- Organ (Korg SP-200)
- Piano (SampleTank)
- Mastering (Ozone 3)

Don't make kids cry...



...use Marimba in your tension cues

Most cues need to lift...



...every eight measures or so

Common ways to LIFT a cue:

- Add percussion
- Add a pad, or high string line
- Add a more rhythmic bass line
- Add a “B” section
- Start with sparse instrumentation

Neo-Soul: Analyzing Corinne

What are the songwriting elements?

- Common chord structures
- Melodic structure
- Lyric vernacular (positive, female empowering)

What are the production elements?

- Drums, old school, loop
- Rhythm guitar vibes
- Tempo
- Old school instrumentation (Rhodes, etc...)
- Sparse arrangement
- Real instruments (horns, etc)
- **VOCAL VIBE** and sound



SWAMP: capture the *vibe*



COMMON SWAMP ELEMENTS

- Stereotypical Instruments
- Dobro
- Slide guitar
- Blues harp
- Banjo (not hillbilly)
- Drop D tuning
- Percussion
- REAL instruments
- Heavy reverb (deep in swamp)
- Light reverb (not-so-deep in the swamp)

Underscore = → → ↓



**Mute
The
Lead**

CAPTURING THE ESSENCE

...without infringing on copyright

Discovering the song DNA

- Tempo
- Rhythm interplay
- Instrumentation
- Chord structure
- Melodic structure
- Arrangement
- “Sounds” of instruments
- Instrumentation combinations
- FX
- Mix
- Lyric vernacular
- Vocal sound and performance
- Do not copy note for note



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