

Star Wars: The Musical Experience, Part 3

Music From Beyond the Outer Rim

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Check out the Musical Experience archives!

[1: Producing a Soundtrack for Your Games](#)

[2: Bringing Balance to the Music](#)

The music of the *Star Wars* saga helps set it apart from other films with its distinct themes and style. In fact, one could say that the soundtrack is a contributing factor that has helped *Star Wars* remain popular as long as it has. Many people believe that, if Lucas had selected contemporary works from the 1970s for Episode IV's soundtrack, the saga would not have made it past the first movie. At the same time, one may wonder what *Star Wars* would have been like if other music had been used. In this installment, we explore that very idea by offering tips and suggestions for you to import music into your game from sources outside of the *Star Wars* movies.

When is it appropriate for other music to be used in your game? Many *Star Wars* purists would cry, "Never!" By not using other sources, however, you may limit the potential for a lot of great music to enhance your adventures. Certain scenarios not originally conceived in the saga may present themselves in your game, and music may help bring a sense of cohesiveness. And if the track you seek is not found in the music of the six movies, you have no choice but to look elsewhere.



While you peruse other albums to find the perfect track, keep certain elements in mind. First, focus on strictly instrumental music. Hearing words to a particular song playing in the background can be one of the biggest distractions for you as well as your players. Many players have complained about a fellow gamer or even their GM breaking out into song in the middle of combat because they started singing along with the song that is supposed to augment the game. To put it bluntly, lyrics are bad! The only exception is music with an element of choral voices singing in a foreign or created language. "Duel of the Fates" is a prime example of this type.

Second, be careful of tracks from other movies that include familiar themes. If one of your players recognizes that theme, you may find your group suddenly talking about the movie it came from instead of concentrating on the game. Worse, they might jump universes in the middle of your epic *Star Wars* battle and start talking about a particular scene out of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. Although Captain Kirk and his away team won't appear to shoot your Sith Lord with phasers on stun, the interruption created by the theme has already been made and will take a lot of work during that session to fix.



Finally (and probably one of the most important suggestions), strive to find music with a similar sound and feel as the *Star Wars* movie soundtracks. For example, even though John Williams is probably best known for his *Star Wars* compositions, he has written music for other movies that could easily fit into your game without the other players noticing much difference. Some examples that come to mind are the Harry Potter, Indiana Jones, and Jurassic Park movies -- just watch out for tracks with overly familiar themes, as noted above.

Other composers have written music for movies that could prove to be valuable in filling your gaming music library. Composers such as Danny Elfman (*Batman*, *Men in Black*, *Spider-Man*), James Horner (*Braveheart*, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, *Titanic*), and Graeme Revell (*The Crow*, *Pitch Black*, *Sin City*) have scores that you may find useful for your game's soundtrack. Also, don't discount classical compositions, which run the gamut of styles and can contribute to a colorful soundtrack. Music from the Romantic period (19th century), such as the works of Schubert and Tchaikovsky and the later works of Beethoven, are highly suggested.



Depending on what style of game you run, you might be able to use other sources of *Star Wars* music, such as videogames and computer games. They might allow you to open their music folder without necessarily playing through the game first. In fact, some of the game's music might be available online for

you to download. For example, the music from **Star Wars Republic Commando**, once available from LucasArts.com as a free download, is [now available](#) on a fan Web site.

Other Tracks

The possibilities for new music for your *Star Wars* game are virtually endless. But you have to know what to look for before you can find the tracks you want. The tips and selections in the previous articles (see the archive box below) give examples of the type of music to seek when assembling your soundtrack.

To assist you further, let's analyze the soundtrack from another movie -- *Dragonheart*, composed by Randy Edelman. As with the examples from the *Star Wars* films, we'll categorize the music according to how the selections might be used, along with time references for easy location of each excerpt. Some of these selections are short, perhaps just 30 to 40 seconds. Although that's not an ideal length of time for a track, you might find that it's all you need for a given scene.

Music for celebrations

None

Music for chases

- "Einon" (track 4, start at 3:20)
- "A Refreshing Swim" (track 9)

Music for combat (ground battles)

- "Bowen's Decoy" (track 11, start at 1:03, end at 1:51)
- "Kyle, The Wheat Boy" (track 12, start at 1:49, end at 2:44)
- "Flight To Avalon" (track 14, start at 1:02, end at 1:44)

Music for combat (lightsaber duels)

"Bowen's Ride" (track 6, start at 0:28, end at 0:49)

Music for combat (starship battles)

"Flight to Avalon" (track 14, start at 0:07, end at 0:48)

Music for encounters (aliens)

"The Last Dragon Slayer" (track 5, end at 1:20)

Music for encounters (enemies)

- "Einon" (track 4, start at 0:55, end at 1:58)
- "Bowen's Decoy" (track 11, end at 1:03)
- "The Connection" (track 13, end at 0:48)
- "Finale" (track 15, start at 2:19, end at 2:46)

Music for views (establishments)

"Mexican Standoff" (track 7, start at 0:29, end at 1:10)

Music for views (landscapes)

- "Wonders Of An Ancient Glory" (track 3, end at 1:11)
- "Re-Baptism" (track 10, end at 1:40)



Feel free to post your thoughts or questions about this article in [this message board thread](#).

About the Author

Patrick Stutzman is a freelance game designer whose credits include *Threats of the Galaxy* and the upcoming *The Clone Wars Campaign Guide* for the **Star Wars Roleplaying Game** Saga Edition. He also maintains his Web site, [Star Wars: The Forgotten Tales](#), and works on [SWRPGNetwork](#) under the name of Jan Tolbara.

Currently, he lives in Kansas City with his wife, two children, and an annoying Force spirit that follows him wherever he goes. If you have any tips on how to get rid of this spirit, let him know.

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