

GALCOVILLE AND THE FOREST

music notes by Malachy Robinson

Writing music for a drama (for a movie or a play), it's a good idea to be quite economical with the material. You need enough variety to set the right moods, but too many ingredients can distract the audience's attention from the story. So I wrote just two main motifs for Galcoville (a motif is just a short tune) and a waltz. Here are all the main elements, and how they work:

1 **Birdsong**: the violin plays imitations of various Irish birds.

2 the **Pangur/ Forest Motif**, always accompanied by the **Nature Heartbeat**.

The heartbeat gives a feeling that's peaceful but vibrant, alive. This music is slow because the forest is big and old, established: the slow speed makes it feel permanent. The Pangur/Forest motif is also peaceful but lively and playful too, like a small forest creature. It features syncopations (the notes are played before the beats rather than on them) to make it playful.

3 the **City Tune** is a waltz, meaning a dance with 3 beats per bar. Because it's an old-fashioned dance, it makes us feel that City man is in a city in the past, not a modern one. This matches the black-and-white photos of the city people.

4 After City man visits the forest, we add some birdsong-like elements on the violin to his waltz tune, and you can hear the nature heartbeat there too now. He brings his memories of the forest with him to the city.

5 As the city grows we progress in time, and get closer to the present; to make the music more modern, we introduce the **City/ Party motif**. This is jazzy, again syncopated but much quicker than the Pangur/ Forest motif so the effect of the syncopations is quite different: there is urgency there, and it's a rising motif which helps us feel the mounting tension as the city grows out of control.

6 The waltz disappears and the music gets more noisy, including the **Party Chords** which make it very jazzy. It is not the same old-fashioned city any more!

7 After the music reaches its energetic climax, and the people finally listen to the children and STOP ... the music stops. It's amazing how powerful it can be not to have any music for a moment, when it has been constant until now.

8 the rest of the music is a return to the forest of the beginning, but now it has changed a bit: it's a little faster than the beginning, because we are focusing on re-growth, new life, a faster heartbeat. Also, the harmony has more movement in it (listen to the bass)... there is more direction as the new forest establishes itself.

9 Finally, the music rises and crescendos to the end with a stronger and stronger heartbeat; we are reassured that nature is thriving.

- Malachy Robinson

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galcoville educational pack

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NATURE HEARTBEAT slow, peaceful

