

Spinning a Web of Sound: Exploring the Music of Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse

Introduction: Beyond the Visuals

Think about 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse'. What makes it so cool? The animation, the story, the characters... definitely! But what about the *sound*? The music, composed primarily by Daniel Pemberton, is like another character in the movie, guiding our feelings and telling us about the different universes and people Miles meets. Today, we're going to swing into that world of sound and explore how music helps tell the story.

Materials Check:

- Access to the 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse' soundtrack
- Listening device (computer, tablet, phone)
- Headphones (optional)
- Notebook/paper and pen/pencil
- Access to movie clips (optional)

Activity 1: Meet the Themes! (Listening & Identifying)

Just like characters have unique looks and personalities, they often have unique *musical themes* in movies. This is sometimes called a 'leitmotif' – a short musical idea that represents a person, place, idea, or feeling. Let's listen to parts of a few key tracks:

1. **Miles Morales' Theme:** Listen to 'Miles Morales' or 'Ain't No Ceiling'. What does this music sound like? (Think: hip-hop beats, maybe some scratching sounds, heroic but also youthful energy). How does it match Miles? Write down 3 words to describe the music and 3 words to describe Miles. Do they connect?
2. **Gwen Stacy's Theme:** Listen to 'Gwen Stacy' or 'Spider-Woman'. How is this different from Miles' music? (Think: driving drums, maybe a bit more rock/punk influence, sometimes atmospheric). How does this match Gwen's character and her universe? Write down 3 words to describe her music and 3 words for Gwen.
3. **The Spot's Theme:** Listen to 'Spot Holes 2'. What does this sound like? (Think: weird, unsettling, maybe glitchy sounds, builds tension). How does this make you feel about the character? Why do you think the composer chose these sounds for The Spot?

Activity 2: Music in Action (Analysis)

Music doesn't just introduce characters; it sets the mood and punches up the action. Let's think about specific moments (or listen to tracks associated with big scenes):

- **Tempo (Speed):** How does the speed of the music change during a chase scene versus a quiet, emotional moment? Think about the track 'Nueva York Train Chase'. How does the fast tempo make you feel?
- **Instrumentation (Instruments):** What kinds of instruments do you hear? Miles' world often features sounds like synthesizers and drum machines found in hip-hop. Gwen's might have more electric guitar and drums. Miguel O'Hara's theme ('Spider-Man 2099') has a futuristic, electronic, almost aggressive sound. How do the chosen instruments fit the different characters or locations (like the Indian-inspired music for Pavitr Prabhakar in 'Spider-Man India')?
- **Mood:** How does the music make you feel? Happy? Tense? Sad? Excited? Listen to 'Falling Apart'. How does the music convey the emotion of the scene it likely accompanies?

Activity 3: Create a Spider-Persona (Creative Extension - Optional)

Imagine you are creating a *new* Spider-Person from a different universe. What kind of music would represent them?

- Describe your Spider-Person briefly (their personality, their universe's style).
- What genre of music would be their main theme (e.g., classical, jazz, electronic, folk)?
- What instruments would be prominent?
- Would their music be fast or slow? Major key (happier sounding) or minor key (sadder/more serious sounding)?
- Write a short description of their musical theme.

Wrap-up: The Soundtrack's Web

Today we explored how the soundtrack for 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse' uses musical themes (leitmotifs), tempo, and instrumentation to bring characters and scenes to life. The score is a powerful tool that helps tell the story and makes us feel connected to the action and emotion on screen. Next time you watch a movie, pay close attention to the music – you might be surprised by what it tells you!

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

- Which character theme from the movie is your favorite, and why?
- Can you think of another movie where the music was really memorable? What made it stand out?
- How did listening closely to the music change how you think about the movie?