

“The Shape of Things to Come”: Identity and Destiny in the Music of *Battlestar Galactica*

Megan H. Francisco

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Stephen Rumph, Chair

Christina Sunardi

Stephen Groening

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Megan H. Francisco

University of Washington

Abstract

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Megan H. Francisco

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Stephen Rumph

School of Music

This dissertation project pioneers a new approach to the analysis of science fiction television music through analysis of the music of the 2004-2009 series *Battlestar Galactica*. Most originally, the dissertation applies Gloria Anzaldúa’s theory of *la mestiza* from feminist, race, and posthuman studies to the social world constructed by the series’ soundtrack. As I argue, *Battlestar Galactica* transformed the fundamental rules of engagement between music and narrative. This dissertation will build on prior work in science fiction film and television studies as I analyze the role of music in all four seasons. In particular, this dissertation focuses on the critical role music plays in the construction of race, gender, and religion on the series.

Chapter One analyzes how the series follows the conventions of the so-called “space opera” subgenre of science fiction but complicates it by introducing the post-9/11 issues of terrorism and waterboarding. Furthermore, this chapter engages in genre theory, noting how the creator’s resistance to traditional space operas paradoxically resulted in a show deeply indebted to traditional operatic tropes. Chapter Two follows the lead of scholars who have applied post-colonial theories to science fiction, delving into the ways in which music is used to “Other” the

mechanical Cylons. Chapter Three brings new insights to the much-discussed issues of diegetic music, emphasizing the impact that music and spirituality have on *Battlestar Galactica*'s narrative. Finally, Chapter Four pulls from gender scholarship—specifically, feminist research on cyborgs by Anzaldúa and Donna Haraway—to trace how music functions to evoke a utopian future. This dissertation grounds these theories in the examination of primary source materials (the episodes, commentaries, podcasts by the series' writers, and writings by the composer, Bear McCreary) as well as musical and semiotic analysis of the score.

Although this dissertation will incorporate theories from other disciplines, I will always return to one primary question: how does the music of *Battlestar Galactica* function both inside and outside of the narrative? This crucial question explores the groundbreaking ways in which the music of *BSG* operated and explores how the series ultimately advanced science fiction television. This dissertation ultimately argues that *BSG* transformed the fundamental rules of engagement between music and narrative. In doing so, my research ultimately pushes music scholarship into new avenues of exploration and to contribute to the expanding canon of science fiction television scholarship.

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Life has a melody, Gaius. A rhythm of notes that become your existence once they're played in harmony with God's plan. It's time to do your part and realize your destiny... Come, see the face of the shape of things to come.

Head Six, *Battlestar Galactica*, Season 1, Episode 13

Introduction

Battlestar Galactica revolutionized science fiction television. The series, which ran from 2004 to 2009, synthesized commentary on politics, gender, race, and religion in a story of warring humans and machines. Created in the shadow of 9/11, Ronald D. Moore's reimagining of the eponymous 1978 series won critical praise and still endures as a cult classic. The popularity of the series led to references and spoofs in other television shows, such as Dwight Schrute's infamous love, as described by Jim, of "Bears, beets, and *Battlestar Galactica*" in *The Office*.¹ The show's legacy continued to grow following the series finale, leading *Entertainment Weekly* to place *Battlestar Galactica* (hereafter, *BSG*) on its list of "26 Best Cult TV Shows Ever."² More recently, references to *BSG* have seeped into modern political commentary, including a controversial *Vice* article entitled, "*Battlestar Galactica* is Essential Viewing in the Age of Trump."³ The legacy of *BSG* endures today and has prompted multiple spin-offs. Moore's short-lived *Caprica* (2010), for example, took place fifty-eight years prior to the events in *BSG*. NBC's streaming service, Peacock, greenlighted a new *BSG* series this year to be

¹ *The Office*, season 3, episode 21, "Product Recall," directed by Randall Einhorn, aired April 26, 2007 on NBC.

² EW Staff, "26 Best Cult TV Shows Ever," *Entertainment Weekly*, March 14, 2014, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://ew.com/gallery/26-best-cult-tv-shows-ever/>.

³ Brenden Gallagher, "*Battlestar Galactica* is Essential Viewing in the Age of Trump," *Vice*, August 14, 2017, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/j558m4/battlestar-galactica-is-essential-viewing-in-the-age-of-trump>

produced by Sam Esmail.⁴ In addition, Simon Kinberg is set to write and produce a *BSG* feature film for Universal, and has hailed the series as “one of the holy grails in science fiction.”⁵

In *BSG*, twelve human colonies have created Cylons, or robots invented to serve them. Prior to the series’ beginning, the Cylons revolted and disappeared, but they return at the opening of the *BSG* miniseries, a three-hour program that preceded the television show. In the miniseries, the Cylons attack the Twelve Colonies with nuclear weapons, killing most of humanity. Less than 100,000 survivors remain, with only one military vessel known as the battlestar *Galactica*.⁶ The subsequent television series revolves around the Colonial Fleet fleeing the Cylons and seeking the promised land of Earth, where they hope to start anew.⁷ Their mission is complicated, however, by the presence of humanoid Cylon models onboard *Galactica*. At its core, *BSG* is a story of survival, endurance, and perseverance against adversaries.

Seizing on the series’ popularity and influence, critics have engaged with a variety of topics. Scholarship on technology and science fiction genre inspired the most prominent studies,

⁴ Dan Clarendon, “What We Know about Peacock’s New *Battlestar Galactica* Series,” *TV Insider*, July 17, 2020, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://www.tvinsider.com/935779/battlestar-galactica-reboot-peacock-series-sam-esmail/>.

⁵ Borys Kit, “Simon Kinberg to Write, Produce *Battlestar Galactica* Movie for Universal (Exclusive),” *The Hollywood Reporter*, October 22, 2020, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/simon-kinberg-to-write-produce-battlestar-galactica-movie-for-universal-exclusivex>.

⁶ Season 2 reveals that another military vessel survived, the battlestar *Pegasus*, but those in the Colonial Fleet believe that *Galactica* is the only ship left until *Pegasus* arrives. *Battlestar Galactica*, season 2, episode 10, “*Pegasus*,” directed by Michael Rymer, aired September 23, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 5.

⁷ See Appendix A for summaries of the four seasons.

including pieces by Kieran Tranter and Sérgio Dias Branco.⁸ Political scholars such as Brian Ott, Erika Johnson-Lewis, and Steven Rawle have discussed the influence of 9/11 and its aftermath on the narrative.⁹ Karen Randall drew parallels to waterboarding, while Christian W. Erickson discussed the culture of counter-terrorism.¹⁰ Similarly, the themes of imperialism, militarism, and nuclear warfare have provoked analysis.¹¹ Queer, gender, and sexuality theory studies also abound, including scholarship on the tension in the series between a matriarchal society and the

⁸ Sérgio Dias Branco, “Sci-Fi Ghettos: *Battlestar Galactica* and Genre Aesthetics,” in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigation Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, Roz Kaveney and Jennifer Stoy, eds., 185–198 (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2010). Kieran Tranter, *Living in Technical Legality: Science Fiction and Law as Technology*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 76–106. Kieran Tranter, “‘Frakking Toasters’ and Jurisprudences of Technology: The Exception, the Subject and Techné in *Battlestar Galactica*,” *Law and Literature* 19, no. 1 (2007): 45–75. For further scholarship, see Geoff Ryman, “The Science Fiction Dream,” *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 18, no. 2 (70) (2007): 232–46. Lorna Jowett, “Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to Know? Negotiating Stereotypes of Science,” in *Cylons in America: Critical Studies in Battlestar Galactica*, Tiffany Potter and C.W. Marshall, eds., 64–75 (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2008).

⁹ Erika Johnson-Lewis, “Torture, Terrorism, and Other Aspects of Human Nature,” in *Cylons in America*, 27–39. Brian L. Ott, “(Re)Framing Fear: Equipment for Living in a Post-9/11 World,” in *Cylons in America*, 13–26. Steven Rawle, “Real-imaging Terror in *Battlestar Galactica*: Negotiating Real and Fantasy in *Battlestar Galactica*’s Political Metaphor,” in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigation Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, 129–153. For further scholarship, see Shawn Malley, *Excavating the Future: Archaeology and Geopolitics in Contemporary North American Science Fiction Film and Television* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018). Charles Tessier and Charles-Antoine Millette, “Réinterprétation Et Transposition: L’histoire, Les Institutions Et Les Dynamiques Politiques Américaines Dans *Battlestar Galactica*,” in *D’Asimov à Star Wars: Représentations Politiques Dans La Science-fiction*, Lacroix Isabelle and Prémont Karine, eds., 127–40 (Québec: Presses De L’Université Du Québec, 2016).

¹⁰ Karen Randell, “‘Now the Gloves Come Off’: The Problematic of ‘Enhanced Interrogation Techniques’ in ‘*Battlestar Galactica*,’” *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 1 (2011): 168–73. Christian W. Erickson, “Counter-Terror Culture: Ambiguity, Subversion, or Legitimization?” *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 2 (2007): 197–214.

¹¹ Marco Fey, Annika E Poppe, and Carsten Rauch, “The Nuclear Taboo, *Battlestar Galactica*, and the Real World: Illustrations from a Science-fiction Universe,” *Security Dialogue* 47, no. 4 (2016): 348–65. Roz Kaveney, “The Military Organism: Rank, Family and Obedience in *Battlestar Galactica*,” in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigation Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, 110–128. Rikk Mulligan, “The Cain Mutiny: Reflecting the Faces of Military Leadership in a Time of Fear,” in *Cylons in America*, 52–63. Corrine Pache, “‘So Say We All’ – Reimagining Empire and The ‘Aeneid,’” *Classical Outlook* 87, no. 4 (2010): 132–36. Juliana Hu Pegues, “Miss Cylon: Empire and Adoption in ‘*Battlestar Galactica*,’” *MELUS* 33, no. 4 (2008): 189–209.

objectification of female bodies.¹² Furthermore, Geoff Ryman, Christopher Deis, and Juliana Hu Pegues analyzed the series through a postcolonial lens while Jennifer Stoy, C.W. Marshall, and Matthew Wheeland discussed the role of religion in *BSG*.¹³ Yet despite this abundance of scholarship, only one published article exists on the music of *BSG*, Eftychia Papanikolaou's study of Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower" in the Season 3 finale.¹⁴ This article appeared, however, before Season 4 aired with its revolutionary interaction between soundtrack and narrative. This dissertation will extend the critical literature on *BSG* by analyzing the role of music in all four seasons of *BSG*. Specifically, I will focus on the essential role that music plays in the construction of race, gender, and religion.

More broadly, this dissertation aims to inject a new musical perspective into science fiction research. To date, scholars have explored science fiction through a multitude of mediums, including cinema, television, cartoons, and video games. Science fiction cinema scholarship is the most prevalent, dating back to Georges Méliès's groundbreaking silent film *Le Voyage dans*

¹² Karen K. Burrows, "The Luxury of Being Simply Human: Unwritten and Rewritten Queer Histories in *Battlestar Galactica*," in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigation Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, 199–218. Matthew Jones, "Butch Girls, Brittle Boys and Sexy, Sexless Cylons: Some Gender Problems in *Battlestar Galactica*," in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigation Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, 154–184. Lorna Jowett, "Frak Me: Reproduction, Gender, Sexuality," in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigation Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, 59–80. Kevin J. Wetmore Jr., "Pyramid, Boxing, and Sex," in *Cylons in America*, 76–88.

¹³ Jim Casey, "'All This Has Happened Before': Repetition, Reimagination, and Eternal Return," in *Cylons in America*, 237–250. Christopher Deis, "Erasing Difference: The Cylons as Racial Other," in *Cylons in America*, 156–168. Tamara C. Ho, "Articulating Asia in SF," *Science Fiction Studies* 44, no. 3 (2017): 587–91. Geoff Ryman, "Adama and (Mitochondrial) Eve: A Foundation Myth for White Folks," in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigation Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, 37–58. C.W. Marshall and Matthew Wheeland, "The Cylons, the Singularity, and God," in *Cylons in America*, 91–104. Jennifer Stoy, "Of Great Zeitgeist and Bad Faith: An Introduction to *Battlestar Galactica*," in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigation Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, 1–36.

¹⁴ Eftychia Papanikolaou, "Of Duduks and Dylan: Negotiating Music and the Aural Space," in *Cylons in America*, 224–236.

la Lune (1902).¹⁵ Indeed, science fiction cinema includes a wide range of topics ripe for study. Dystopian futures (*Planet of the Apes*), utopian futures (*Minority Report*), the advent of technology and the rise of machines (*The Terminator*), the exploration of space (*2001: A Space Odyssey*), and alien encounters (*Alien*) are only some of the stories told through film. As a result, cinema scholarship abounds.¹⁶

Although cinema studies has a larger reach, science fiction television scholarship has emerged as an equally necessary field. Charlotte Howell, for example discussed the rise of quality television, particularly science fiction series like *The X-Files*, in the 1990s.¹⁷ J.P. Telotte surveyed the history of science fiction television across four decades, noting the monumental

¹⁵ For more information, see Matthew Solomon, *Fantastic Voyages of the Cinematic Imagination: Georges Méliès's Trip to the Moon*, SUNY Series, Horizons of Cinema (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011). Keith M. Johnston, *Science Fiction Film: A Critical Introduction*, Berg Film Genres Series (Oxford; New York: Berg Publishers, 2011). Thomas C. Renzi, *Jules Verne on Film: A Filmography of the Cinematic Adaptations of His Works, 1902 through 1997* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1998).

¹⁶ For a brief survey of science fiction cinema scholarship, see Christine Cornea, *Science fiction cinema: Between Fantasy and Reality* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007). Annette Kuhn, *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema* (London; New York: Verso, 1990). I. Q. Hunter, *British Science Fiction Cinema*, British Popular Cinema (London; New York: Routledge, 1999). Eliot Chayt, "Revisiting Italian Post-Neorealist Science-Fiction Cinema (1963–74)," *Science-fiction Studies* 42, no. 2 (2015): 322–38. Sherryl Vint, "Possibilities for a Science-Fiction Cinema," *Science-fiction Studies* 43, no. 3 (2016): 563–72. Aidan Power, *Contemporary European Science Fiction Cinemas*, Palgrave European Film and Media Studies (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2018). Ewa Mazierska, *Red Alert: Marxist Approaches to Science Fiction Cinema*, Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2016). Robert Rushing, "The Weight of History: Immunity and the Nation in Italian Science-Fiction Cinema," *Science-fiction Studies* 42, no. 2 (2015): 339–52. Ziauddin Sardar and Sean Cubitt, *Aliens R Us: The Other in Science Fiction Cinema* (London; Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2002). Marianne Kac-Vergne, *Masculinity in Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema: Cyborgs, Troopers and Other Men of the Future* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018). Jennifer L. Feeley and Sarah Ann Wells, *Simultaneous Worlds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

¹⁷ Charlotte E. Howell, "Legitimizing Genre," *Critical Studies in Television* 12, no. 1 (2017): 35–50.

importance of shows such as *Star Trek* and *Lost in Space*.¹⁸ Lincoln Geraghty tracked series out of the United States alongside political movements while others—such as Tobias Hochscherf, James Leggott, Donald E. Palumbo, and C. W. Sullivan—noted the influence of British politics on series.¹⁹ Furthermore, critical topics such as gender and race feature prominently in science fiction television scholarship.²⁰ Despite this abundance of scholarship, few musicologists interact with television studies. Phillip Hayward and KJ Donnelly pioneered the field, including the collection of essays entitled *Music in Science Fiction Television*.²¹ The collection is far from comprehensive, however, and leaves many essential science fiction series for future scholarship.

In expanding the scholarship on science fiction television music, I approach this dissertation as a musicologist. Although the study of dialogue, soundtrack, and sound effects are all an essential part of television scholarship, this dissertation focuses primarily on the soundtrack. Furthermore, my focus on the reimagined *BSG* series allows for a detailed analysis of the original score created specifically for the show by composer Bear McCreary. As a result, this dissertation largely studies the creation of the show's soundtrack and its interactions with the narrative rather than its reception by viewers. My analysis is grounded in the examination of

¹⁸ J.P. Telotte, *The Essential Science Fiction Television Reader*, Essential Readers in Contemporary Media (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

¹⁹ Lincoln Geraghty, *American Science Fiction Film and Television* (London; New York, NY: Berg, 2009). Tobias Hochscherf and James Leggott, eds., *British Science Fiction Film and Television: Critical Essays* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011).

²⁰ Diana Adesola Mafe, *Where No Black Woman Has Gone Before* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018). Elyce Rae Helford, *Fantasy Girls: Gender in the New Universe of Science Fiction and Fantasy Television* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

²¹ Philip Hayward, *Off the Planet: Music, Sound and Science Fiction Cinema* (London; Bloomington, IN: John Libbey; distributed in North America by Indiana University Press, 2004). K.J. Donnelly and, Philip Hayward, eds., *Music in Science Fiction Television*, Routledge Music and Screen Media Series (London: Routledge, 2013).

primary source materials, including the episodes, commentaries, podcasts by the series' writers, and online commentaries by McCreary.

This dissertation's reading of *BSG* extends beyond music studies to engage theories of alterity, the mechanical, and posthumanism. My research also contributes to the study of science fiction and, more specifically, the space opera genre. Gender stereotypes, for example, abound in science fiction literature, films, and television shows, yet while film critics have delved into this problematic topic, music scholars have barely scratched the surface. Similarly, music plays a critical role in the construction of race and religious symbolism in science fiction.

I develop my analysis through four chapters, each of which focuses on a different aspect of the music. Chapter One analyzes how the series follows the conventions of the so-called "space opera" subgenre of science fiction yet complicates it by introducing the post-9/11 issues of terrorism and waterboarding. Furthermore, this chapter engages with genre theory, noting how the creator's resistance to traditional space operas paradoxically resulted in a show deeply indebted to traditional operatic tropes. Chapter Two interacts scholars who have applied post-colonial theories to science fiction, delving into the ways in which music is used to "Other" the mechanical Cylons. Chapter Three brings new insights to the much-discussed issue of diegetic music, emphasizing the impact that music and spirituality have on *BSG*'s narrative. Finally, Chapter Four expands upon gender scholarship, especially feminist research on cyborgs by Anzaldúa and Donna Haraway, to trace how music functions to evoke a utopian future.

Although this dissertation will incorporate theories from other disciplines, I will always return to one primary question: how does the music of *Battlestar Galactica* function both inside and outside of the narrative? This crucial question explores the groundbreaking ways in which the music of *BSG* operated and examines how the series ultimately advanced science fiction

television. This dissertation argues that *BSG* transformed the fundamental rules of engagement between music and narrative. In doing so, my research pushes music scholarship into new avenues of exploration and contributes to the expanding canon of science fiction television scholarship.

Chapter 1: (Space) Opera

BSG revolutionized “space opera.”¹ Moore invoked this subgenre of science fiction explicitly in his manifesto “Naturalistic Science Fiction, or Taking the Opera out of Space Opera.” He repudiated the traditional space opera—shows like *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who*—asserting that it was outdated, overdone, and unrealistic:

Our goal is nothing less than the reinvention of the science fiction television series. We take as a given the idea that the traditional space opera, with its stock characters, techno-double-talk, bumpy-headed aliens, thespian histrionics, and empty heroics has run its course and a new approach is required. That approach is to introduce realism into what has heretofore been an aggressively unrealistic genre.²

BSG revised iconic elements of the classic space opera, including plot, characters, editorial style, and cinematography. And while Moore neglected to mention music in his essay, composer Bear McCreary revolutionized the soundtrack with exotic timbres and rhythms that departed from the traditional brassy fanfares.

And yet, for all of Moore’s assertions that his show was “not just another space opera,” *BSG* embodies many of the subgenre’s defining characteristics.³ Space opera traces its origins back to the 1930s and ’40s when books and radio serials dominated entertainment. The term, coined by magazine journalist Wilson Tucker in 1941, draws from other popular genres of the time: “In these hectic days of phrase-coining, we offer one. Westerns are called ‘horse operas,’ the morning housewife tearjerkers are called ‘soap operas.’ For the hacky, grinding, stinking,

¹ This chapter is a reproduction of my previously published work in the *Journal of the Society for American Music*. “*Battlestar Galactica* and Space Opera: Transforming a Subgenre,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 15, no. 1 (Winter, 2021). Reproduced with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

² Ronald D. Moore, *Battlestar Galactica: Series Bible*, December 17, 2003, 2, https://www.harvardwood.org/writers_resources (accessed March 15, 2020).

³ *Ibid.*

outworn space-ship yarn, or world-saving for that matter, we offer ‘space opera’.⁴ Tucker was clearly taking a swipe at the formulaic, mediocre products he regularly encountered. The operatic label refers not to the musical genre, but rather to an overarching concept of melodrama and intense emotions. Furthermore, Tucker suggested that space opera must possess certain key characteristics, including a spaceship, journeys through uncharted realms, and an exciting narrative often resolved with violence.⁵ Brian Aldiss subsequently expanded the criteria to include the questioning of reality, probing of the limit of knowledge, and some form of exile.⁶ Furthermore, space operas often took on Ruritanian traits, projecting terrestrial traits, often from medieval Europe, onto alien worlds.⁷

Space opera adapted to the Cold War era, adding social commentary and updated technology, but it retained its inferior standing compared to other science fiction subgenres. Critical opinion of space opera changed drastically in 1977, however, thanks to George Lucas’s stunningly popular space adventure, *Star Wars*.⁸ The film, which ushered in a new era of space opera, was lauded by Jerome Winter as a “sophisticated reharnessing of conventional pulp-era

⁴ David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer, “Space Opera Redefined,” in *Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction*, ed. James Gunn and Matthew Candelaria (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005), 260.

⁵ Gary Westfahl, “Space Opera,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197–208.

⁶ Hartwell and Cramer, “Space Opera Redefined,” 260.

⁷ Westfahl, “Space Opera,” 206.

⁸ Producer Lester Del Rey and his wife Judy Lynn are widely credited with this reversal of opinion after working hard to push *Star Trek: The Original Series* and *Star Wars* as poster children for new space opera. Hartwell and Cramer, “Space Opera Redefined,” 263.

trappings.”⁹ New Space Opera, as modern critics dubbed it, also challenged the low standards of previous decades. As Jerome Winter explained,

Prior to the emergence of the New Space Opera, this subgenre had long been in disrepute within the field not only for its aesthetic failings but also for its ideological tendencies: its quasi-fascistic fascination with supermen and super weapons, its abiding racism, sexism and class bigotry, as well as its juvenile wish-fulfillment fantasy...but it was not until the late 1980s and especially the 1990s and 2000s that coordinated attempts were made...to systematically rehabilitate the ideological presumptions of space opera.¹⁰

Winter primarily cited novelists as pioneers of New Space Opera, but the revolution continued throughout television and film as well. Today, New Space Opera continues to be a dominant and respected subgenre that produces international blockbusters (*Guardians of the Galaxy*, 2014) and nuanced social commentaries (*Firefly*, 2002–03) on modern culture.¹¹

BSG occupies an uncomfortable position between New Space Opera and the traditional subgenre. The original 1978 *BSG* followed the rules of an orthodox space opera: after the Twelve Colonies of humanity are obliterated by the Cylons, the survivors flee in spacecrafts. Throughout the rest of the short-lived series the Colonial Fleet, protected by the one remaining battlestar, attempts to find Earth while pursued by the Cylons. ABC cancelled the series after one season, although it returned for a limited ten-episode run a year later in *Galactica 1980*. Two decades passed before Moore decided to reimagine the series, during which the New Space Opera movement gained traction.

⁹ These improved narratives introduced a sympathetic hero, an optimistic tone, wars of the future, Byzantine intergalactic diplomacy, and doomsday devices. Jerome Winter, *Science Fiction, New Space Opera, and Neoliberal Globalism: Nostalgia for Infinity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016), 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 8–16.

As he made clear in the *Series Bible* (an outline of the show's rules and narrative), Moore wanted his *BSG* to defy stereotypes of space opera.¹² Moore never mentioned New Space Opera, perhaps because he did not yet know of its existence, but he and the writing team made several changes that align the show with the updated subgenre. As explored in the introduction, the reimagined series continued the same basic narrative as the original except that the story now included humanoid Cylon models to add intrigue. More provocatively, the swashbuckling, cigar-smoking man's man Starbuck was recast as a female in the 2004 miniseries.¹³ The 1978 villain Gaius Baltar also became much more sympathetic in the new series and followed a redemption arc worthy of a hero. Social issues from the 1970s remained, including sexism, racism, and classism, but *BSG* reframed them as nuanced commentaries on the post-9/11 United States.¹⁴ Moore emphasized a desire for relatable characters in his manifesto: "We want the audience to connect with the characters of *Galactica* as people. Our characters are not super-heroes. They are not an elite. They are everyday people caught up in an enormous cataclysm and trying to survive it as best they can. They are you and me."¹⁵ Moore's fight against space opera, particularly popular shows like *Star Trek* and *Stargate SG-1*, mirrored the literary movement towards New Space Opera. Unwittingly or not, Moore created the one of the first New Space Opera television series.

Space opera was not named for the musical genre, but Moore's reimagined series is inescapably operatic. Indeed, it exemplifies "operaticness," a term minted by Marcia Citron:

¹² Moore, *Battlestar Galactica: Series Bible*, 2.

¹³ Sci-Fi first released a 90-minute miniseries introducing *Battlestar Galactica* and, following its success, went on to begin Season 1 in 2005.

¹⁴ Lincoln Geraghty, *American Science Fiction Film and Television*, 118–122. Ott, "(Re)Framing Fear," 13–26.

¹⁵ Underline in original. Moore, *Battlestar Galactica: Series Bible*, 3.

“Operaticness implies that opera is foregrounded, that it is present in an obvious way that makes it recognizable.”¹⁶ Throughout *When Opera Meets Film*, Citron detailed the operatic qualities of cinematic works, such as Francis Ford Coppola’s *Godfather* trilogy (1972-90), Norman Jewison’s *Moonstruck* (1987), and Mike Nichols’s *Closer* (2004). Though Citron only analyzed films that have direct references to opera within them, she expanded the definition in a subsequent study, arguing that “operaticness” applies to any film that inherits operatic tendencies.¹⁷

Citron’s works belong to an expanding body of research on the intersection of opera and cinema. Although writers such as Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler had noted the affinities between the two media, film scholarship did not explore them seriously until Jeremy Tambling’s 1987 study of cinematic adaptations of opera.¹⁸ Citron continued Tambling’s discussion of filmed opera in *Opera on Screen*, while Jeongwon Joe and Rose Theresa analyzed the use of opera arias in narrative films.¹⁹ Michael Grover-Friedlander then followed with a study that explored the way in which cinema accesses a general cultural knowledge of opera without actual operatic scenes or music.²⁰ The studies focused solely on film, yet operatic tropes and music also abound in television and invite similar research.

This chapter will explore the “operaticness” of *BSG*’s narrative, cinematography, editing style, music, and characters. After analyzing the show’s explicit evocations of opera, notably the

¹⁶ Marcia Citron, *When Opera Meets Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 246.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler, *Composing for the Films* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947). Jeremy Tambling, *Opera, Ideology and Film* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1987).

¹⁹ Marcia Citron, *Opera on Screen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). Jeongwon Joe and Rose Theresa ed., *Between Opera and Cinema* (New York; London: Routledge, 2002).

²⁰ Michal Grover-Friedlander, *Vocal Apparitions: The Attraction of Cinema to Opera* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

fantastic Opera House that reappears throughout the series, we shall investigate the soundtrack and its leitmotifs.²¹ Finally, we will relate the characters most intimately tied to the Opera House to operatic stereotypes, particularly the trope of the madwoman. While the *BSG* writers clearly did not model the series on opera, operatic resonances nevertheless permeate the script and score. Moore may have intended to “take the opera out of space opera,” but he succeeded instead in constructing a series profoundly indebted to the classical genre.

The Opera House

The “operaticness” of *BSG* appears most strongly in the revolutionary arc of the series narrative. In the *Series Bible*, Moore outlined how the reimagined world would differentiate itself from contemporary science fiction television series:

In order to maintain and sustain this tension, we will be emphasizing a continuing storyline which will literally continue the Cylon threat to the Colonials as established in the pilot... This format breaks down into three layers: 1. Series Arcs 2. Multi-Episodic Arcs 3. Stand Alone Arcs. The three-tiered format avoids the pitfalls of *Star Trek*'s episodic structure... without turning our show into a true serial.²²

This “narrative complexity,” as Jason Mittell termed it, entails “a redefinition of episodic forms under the influence of serial narration—not necessarily a complete merger of episodic and serial forms but a shifting balance. Rejecting the need for plot closure within every episode that typifies conventional episodic form, narrative complexity foregrounds ongoing stories across a range of genres.”²³ *BSG* relied heavily on narrative complexity, a result of Moore’s frustration

²¹ The *BSG* script uses Opera House as a title and always capitalizes the term. This article will similarly follow suit.

²² Moore, *Battlestar Galactica*, 30.

²³ Jason Mittell, “Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television,” *The Velvet Light Trap* no. 58 (Fall, 2006): 32.

during his time as writer for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.²⁴ The multi-episodic and stand-alone arcs of *BSG* often featured typical space opera plots (a Cylon attack, for example) but its serial arc elevated the show through a focus on interpersonal relationships and the “never-ending Cylon pursuit of the Galactica and her fleet.”²⁵

It is within *BSG*'s serial arc that the show's operatic qualities become apparent. In the Season 1 finale, scientist Gaius Baltar is stranded among the ruins of Kobol – the original planet of the Twelve Colonies where humans and gods coexisted.²⁶ None of the ruins are recognizable structures, but Baltar soon finds himself in the Kobol Opera House, restored to its original splendor.²⁷ Baltar is accompanied by his ubiquitous companion, a hallucinatory version of the Cylon Number Six we will call Head Six.²⁸ The Opera House is immense and beautiful, unlike anything seen previously on *BSG*. As Head Six and Baltar walk down the aisle toward the stage, she comments on the immensity of this moment: “Life has a melody, Gaius. A rhythm of notes that become your existence once played in harmony with God's plan. It's time to do your part and realize your destiny.”²⁹ Six's words resonate throughout the rest of the scene as she leads

²⁴ Steve ‘Frosty’ Weintraub, “Interview: *Battlestar Galactica* Creators Ron Moore and David Eick,” *Collider*, January 7, 2009, <http://collider.com/interview-battlestar-galactica-creators-ron-moore-and-david-eick/>.

²⁵ Moore, *Battlestar Galactica: Series Bible*, 30.

²⁶ See Appendix A for character descriptions.

²⁷ Originally showrunners intended for Baltar to walk into a temple and meet God, which they discuss in the commentary. They felt that this would blatantly betray the show's trajectory, however, and opted instead to replace the temple with an Opera House, further underlining correlations between religion, music, and narrative in the show. *Battlestar Galactica*, season 1, episode 13, “Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2,” directed by Michael Rymer, aired April 1, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 5.

²⁸ There are twelve known Cylon humanoid models and Baltar regularly interacted with Number Six before the Cylons destroyed the twelve colonies. Throughout Season 1, Baltar communicates with an apparition of Six, whom he assumes is a hallucination. For sake of differentiating his hallucinated companion from the actual Number Six he knew previously, I will call them Head Six and Caprica Six respectively. See Appendix A.

²⁹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2.”

Baltar onto the stage and shows him his fate. In a twisted version of the classic opera trope of love versus duty, Baltar finds himself confronted with the choice between self-love and duty to a higher power. Baltar's choice, a decision that he does not fully embrace until the series finale, is henceforth linked to the Opera House.

The Kobol theater explicitly injects opera into the narrative of *BSG*, but the cinematography of the scene further enhances the operatic quality. Kobol stands in stark contrast to the oppressive visual world of the battlestar. The landscape of the planet is saturated in color – natural sunlight, green forests, clear blue water (Figure 1). On the windowless, dimly-lit Galactica, by contrast, dull blacks and grays dominate, complementing the dark green, gray, and black of the military uniforms (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Baltar and Head Six on Kobol³⁰



³⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.”

Figure 2: Adama and Tigh on Galactica³¹



Moore discussed the visual portrayal of the fleet in the miniseries commentary, noting that he aimed to create an aura similar to those found in documentaries.³² In this style, one finds natural colors unfiltered by editing. Camera instability is even more characteristic; though the production qualities of recent documentaries have improved, handheld cameras and shaky movements still unmistakably recall the style. Moore, the writing team, and miniseries director Michael Rymer, embedded these realistic factors into the show from the beginning. On board Galactica the camera is unstable, shifting perspectives abruptly and shaking with the movement of the ship. Even the shots are characteristic of documentaries: rarely does an episode feature any shots requiring camera rigs. Instead, each shot remains near eye level, as if an amateur

³¹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.”

³² *Battlestar Galactica: Miniseries*, directed by Michael Rymer, aired December 8–9, 2003, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 1.

cameraman were following the crew around the ship. As Kevin McNeilly explained, the camera work enhances the sense of materiality:

The series eschews a stable perspective, preferring the feel of embedded points of view, and the textures of improvisational immediacy and documentary presence that a handheld camera offers. We're reminded in every scene that perspective is contingent and temporary, that someone is taking these pictures, making these images. The aperture constantly jingles, drifts, redirects its attention, pulls, and readjusts its focus...the documentary textures of *BSG*'s visuals serve as reminders of a corporeal, human materiality, that informs the whole aesthetic of the program. The handheld, quasi-documentary camera introduces into the screen-image material traces of hands and eyes — two key tropes, the tactile and the visual, that parade nearly every episode.³³

By enhancing the realism of the series, the documentary style defuses the quintessential space opera. On Kobol, by contrast, the cinematography embraces the ideal and theatrical. Abandoning the eye-level documentary manner, the camera indulges in sweeping establishing shots of the planetary landscape and multiple birds-eye shots that slowly zoom in on Baltar. As if accentuating the otherness of this world, the camera shots and angles create a new cinematographic world.

The interior of Kobol's Opera House provides even more contrast with Galactica. As Baltar enters the theater, the camera whirls around him from every angle, registering his awed reaction to the immense Opera House. The deep reds of the velvet seats introduce a color rarely seen, except by Baltar. Head Six's seductive (perhaps devilish) red dress normally draws the eye as a contrast to other Galactica clothing, yet on Kobol she dons an angelic white gown.³⁴ This heavenly color dominates the Opera House. The reds and golds frame three glowing white

³³ Kevin McNeilly, "'This Might Be hard for You to Watch': Salvage Humanity in 'Final Cut'," *Cylons in America*, 186.

³⁴ Despite wearing the color associated with virginity, Head Six's white dress remains skin-tight and nearly see-through. This costuming choice seems to hint that the Six model will play a role in the Opera House but that she will continue to be seductive and alluring.

objects, each essential to the overarching series narrative of the show, which immediately draw the eyes: Head Six, long banners draped from the stage ceiling, and a cradle.

Figure 3: The Opera House Interior³⁵



The music throughout the Opera House vision further emphasizes the significance of this scene. Until this episode, the soundtrack of *BSG* eschews the symphonic style of John Williams and the classic Hollywood orchestra. McCreary commented on his unique instrumentation in his weekly blog: “My initial concept for the score was to use instruments as ancient as possible, hence the heavy reliance on percussion and vocals.”³⁶ McCreary’s innovative use of instruments included using pots, pans, and toasters in scenes with the Cylons, winking at the derogatory “toaster” nickname given to them by those on Galactica. The percussive sound of *BSG* provided

³⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.”

³⁶ Bear McCreary, “Instruments of *Battlestar Galactica*: Duduk,” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, September 28, 2006, accessed December 11, 2017, <http://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/instruments-of-battlestar-galactica-duduk/>.

the show with a timbre unlike any other science fiction series, which was always the intent of the show's producers and directors:

When initially discussing the music for the miniseries with composer Richard Gibbs and myself [director Michael Rymer], knew he wanted something that would totally stand out from the traditional orchestral science fiction score. As the series developed throughout the first season, I continued where the miniseries left off, scoring each episode with a mixed ensemble of ethnic soloists and percussion. When Rymer returned to direct the season finale, *Kobol's Last Gleaming Parts I and II*, he again wanted a score that would stand out...and this time it meant bring the orchestra back. In setting *Passacaglia* against the opening montage of *Kobol's Last Gleaming Part I*, it suddenly felt fresh and new. Were the whole show scored with orchestra, an impact like this would be totally impossible.³⁷

Expanding on McCreary's comments, Eftychia Papanikolaou noted the coding of symphonic music, rather than percussion and "ethnic soloists," as exotic: "Rather than forming a stereotypical mood-creating, aurally unobtrusive, nondiegetic matrix, symphonic music is now meant to startle."³⁸ The orchestra, hinted at during the first episode of the two-part season finale, takes center stage in the Opera House. By emphasizing this orchestral sound, which by now sounds foreign to viewers acquainted with *BSG's* soundscape, McCreary effectively highlights the importance of the theater and subverts space opera's stereotypical musical conventions.³⁹

The music in this climactic scene plays into an operatic narrative that would stretch the entire show while simultaneously foreshadowing the series finale. A key phrase that permeates

³⁷ Bear McCreary, "Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt IV," *Bear McCreary Official Site*, February 4, 2007, accessed December 11, 2017, <http://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/themes-of-battlestar-galactica-pt-iv/>.

³⁸ Eftychia Papanikolaou, "Of Duduks and Dylan," 227.

³⁹ The episode's early scripts called for Baltar to enter the Opera House and discover an orchestra on stage. He would then walk down the aisle, climb to the stage, discover a violin placed on an empty chair, and join in with the orchestra. The writers most likely intended this scene to allude to his acceptance of his destiny but scrapped the plan in favor of a nearly empty stage with an illuminated cradle. Baltar's participation in the orchestra linked him to the larger narrative of music at play throughout the series, but the cradle knit his fate together with Hera, the cyborg child of Athena and Helo. *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2."

BSG alludes to its cyclical nature: “All this has happened before, and all this will happen again.”⁴⁰ First uttered by the Cylon Leoben during his interrogation by Starbuck in “Flesh and Bone” (1.08), the phrase echoes throughout the series and is crucial to the show’s epilogue. At first, the phrase seems to break the fourth wall in a wink at the original *Battlestar Galactica*, but its significance deepens as it becomes increasingly entwined with the destinies of Starbuck (a *Galactica* pilot) and Baltar.⁴¹ By the end of the first season Starbuck’s fate is still unknown, but the Opera House scene prefigures key elements of Baltar’s destiny.

Although Head Six never states “all this has happened before” during the Kobol vision, the accompanying orchestral music reminds listeners of the phrase and foreshadows the series’ conclusion. The orchestra reintroduces the music that McCreary entitled *Passacaglia* in his online commentary. First heard in “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 1” (1.12), the melody is then transforms into *The Shape of Things to Come* motive.⁴² In his blog following the release of Season 2, McCreary noted that he named the former cue after the Baroque form and it serves as a leitmotif for the Kobol Opera House:

This theme, named after the Italian musical form it fits, was composed for the opening montage of *Kobol’s Last Gleaming Part I* and re-appeared during Baltar’s vision of the Opera House in *Part II*...The events of *Kobol’s Last Gleaming* continue to haunt us throughout Season Three and beyond, so I wouldn’t be surprised if this theme re-surfaces from time to time.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 1, episode 8, “Flesh and Bone,” directed by Brad Turner, aired February 25, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 3.

⁴¹ Leoben first states the phrase when telling Starbuck of her crucial role in the fate of humanity and Six reiterates it to Baltar when discussing his redemption arc as an instrument of God. *Battlestar Galactica*, “Flesh and Bone.” *Battlestar Galactica*, season 1, episode 10, “The Hand of God,” directed by Jeff Woolnough, aired March 11, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 4.

⁴² *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.”

⁴³ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt IV.”

supporting harmony, however, oscillates between E major, C major, and A minor, further alluding to the theme's modality.⁴⁶ McCreary's use of a lament here initially seems suspect, as this is a moment of destiny. Rosand argued, however, that the lament was often the "central affective climax" of an opera, a description that ideally suits the Opera House scene.⁴⁷ The lament does not reflect Baltar's awestruck response to the Opera House, but instead foreshadows the trials and tribulations he must endure before the culmination of his prophesied fate.

The operatic qualities of *The Shape of Things to Come* elevates Baltar's vision from the abnormal to the transcendent. The music begins the instant the Kobol Opera House scene begins, starting quietly with sustained low strings and gradually swelling in the oscillating violins. A simple, conjunct, and beautifully consonant melody rises out of the orchestra as Head Six transports Baltar from Kobol's ruins to the full splendor of the Opera House. The strings climb higher and higher as he looks around in wonder and the melody plays once more as Head Six leads Baltar down the aisle. Head Six explicitly links the music to his destiny, proclaiming that "Life has a melody, Gaius... Come, see the face of the shape of things to come."⁴⁸ The strings circle each other over the passacaglia bass line and finally whirl into their higher ranges as Baltar and Head Six gaze at the glowing cradle, overwhelmed by what they find inside. *The Shape of Things to Come* fades as the scene changes to Galactica, but as intercuts between the two locations begin the orchestral passacaglia weaves together with the sounds of Galactica – uniting the two distinct aural and visual worlds in a dramatic, operatic conclusion to the season.

⁴⁶ The piano score is not from McCreary's original score for *Battlestar Galactica*, but his Piano Songbook. In the foreword, however, McCreary wrote that he preserved the music's integrity: "I have personally arranged each of these pieces, ensuring the ideal translation from orchestral score to solo piano." Bear McCreary, "Battlestar Galactica," (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2010), 6, 16.

⁴⁷ Rosand, "The Descending Tetrachord," 356.

⁴⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2."

The Temple of Five

The Opera House continues to play a significant role in *BSG*, particularly as the Cylon Number Three, D'Anna, grows increasingly desperate to know the names of the forbidden "Final Five" Cylon models.⁴⁹ According to legend, the Final Five were descended from the lost Thirteenth Tribe of Kobol and created the humanoid models. Cylon law forbids any pursuit of their identities, but D'Anna begins an earnest quest to uncover the truth of her creators. D'Anna's undertaking dominates the Cylon storyline in Season 3, particularly as she holds Baltar captive.⁵⁰ Together, D'Anna and Baltar travel to the fabled Temple of Five in which she has a rapturous vision of their forbidden identities. In her trance, which is set on the stage of the Opera House, D'Anna realizes that the illuminated banners from Baltar's Kobol experience represent the Final Five. The lighting of the scene and camera angles obscure their features; only D'Anna knows who the Final Five are. In an operatic twist, however, she dies as a result of acquiring this knowledge. The music that accompanies D'Anna's vision is mysterious and wistful, suggesting the elusive identities of the Final Five through three interwoven leitmotifs.

Leitmotifs have a long cinematic history and became ubiquitous in space opera soundtracks after the premiere of *Star Wars*. John Williams's 1977 score revitalized the use of leitmotifs and the symphonic orchestra in Hollywood scoring and echoed through four decades of Skywalker saga films. Matthew Britzler-Stull noted the influence of Wagner on these innovators:

One can debate the chicken-and-egg question of whether it was director George Lucas or composer John Williams who was ultimately responsible for the leitmotivic ethos of the *Star Wars* soundtrack. Certainly, Lucas knew he wanted an orchestral, nineteenth-century

⁴⁹ See Appendix A.

⁵⁰ See Appendix B for a full Season 3 synopsis.

style for *Star Wars*... how much of their approach Lucas and Williams attributed to Wagner in the mid-1970s is not clear, but much of the language both men used to describe the music of the *Star Wars* film (not to mention the music itself) is strongly suggestive of Wagnerian influence, in particular, its ineffable, mythic quality.⁵¹

Williams emphasized a Wagnerian mythic past in many of *Star Wars* leitmotifs. “The Force” theme, in particular, has drawn much discussion, analyzed in-depth by scholars such as James Buhler, Frank Lehman, and Kathryn Kalinak.⁵²

Star Wars may have restored leitmotifs and the symphony orchestra to the silver screen, but it was *Star Trek* that created the stereotypical sound of space opera on television. Ron Rodman argued that, as in *Star Wars*, the title sequence for *Star Trek: The Original Series* (1966-1969) functioned as a leitmotif:

The two *Star Trek* motifs...were used week after week in the series and thus became leitmotivic through weekly repetition. The viewer recognizes these motifs as signatures (or signals) of the program and these themes serve to structure the program in discursive space...In other words, these motifs provide a point of narrative stability or reference within each episode and help to structure the narrative.⁵³

The bold, brassy fanfare of *Star Trek: The Original Series* resonated throughout each subsequent series and film, reinforcing the orchestral timbre of space operas. As Neil Lerner pointed out in his analysis of the many different title themes from *Star Trek*, the sound of each series, although produced over decades, is remarkably similar: “When viewed as a set, the six title themes in fact provide a rather consistent group of European and U.S. musical styles and codes drawn mostly

⁵¹ Matthew Britzner-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 27–273.

⁵² James Buhler, “*Star Wars*, Music, and Myth,” in *Music and Cinema*, James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer, eds. (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 33–57. Frank Lehman, “Transformational Analysis and the Representation of Genius in Film Music,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 35, no. 1 (2013): 1–22. Kathryn Kalinak, *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison and London: University of Wisconsin Press), 1992.

⁵³ Ronald W. Rodman, *Tuning in: American Narrative Television Music*, Oxford Music/Media Series (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 125.

from the cultivated tradition.”⁵⁴ The title themes from both *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* established brass timbre as the characteristic sound of space opera— a sound, as we have seen, which the producers of *BSG* explicitly rejected.

Noting the stereotypical orchestral sound and leitmotivic use of these space opera soundtracks, Moore and other *BSG* producers initially resisted a thematic score. In his blog, McCreary recalled early discussion with producers:

I get asked pretty frequently about the use (or lack thereof) of “themes” in *Battlestar Galactica*. The word “theme” was something that the producers wanted to avoid as they re-launched *Galactica*, I think because they felt that strong, orchestral fanfare had been done to death in science fiction...

However, a musical theme is more malleable and subtle than many people realize. *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* have defined “theme” for more than a generation. In reality, many of those “themes” are full-fledged songs, with a unique A-section, B-section and coda. A theme can be much simpler and more minimal, consisting of the smallest amount of musical information necessary to form identity. This is the model I’ve based *Battlestar* on.⁵⁵

McCreary only uses the term “theme” to describe his musical signifiers, showing how leitmotif and theme are often used synonymously. David Butler, however, argued for an essential difference between the two categories in his analysis of another popular television space opera, the new *Doctor Who* (2005–).⁵⁶ Butler distinguished between composer Murray Gold’s use of leitmotifs and recurring themes: while a theme often features little development, a leitmotif “will seldom remain the same throughout the drama but will transform in structure, key,

⁵⁴ Neil Lerner, “Hearing the Boldly Goings: Tracking the Title Themes of the *Star Trek* Television Franchise, 1966-2005” in *Music in Science Fiction Television*, K.J. Donnelly and Philip Hayward, eds. (New York; London: Routledge, 2013), 69.

⁵⁵ Bear McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt I,” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, September 13, 2006, accessed May 3, 2019, <http://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/themes-of-battlestar-galactica-pt-i/>

⁵⁶ David Butler, “The Work of Music in the Age of Steel: Themes, Leitmotifs and Stock Music in the New *Doctor Who*” in *Music in Science Fiction Television*, 168.

instrumentation, and so on in relation to the unfolding narrative.”⁵⁷ Much of McCreary’s music for *BSG* fits Butler’s criterion for the leitmotif, tracking the show’s unfolding narrative through evolving forms, instrumentation, keys, and meter.

McCreary’s use of leitmotifs permeates the series and enhances moments of transcendence within the plot. The Temple of Five vision in Season 3 provides an exemplary model, as McCreary intertwines three distinct leitmotifs to both to represent D’Anna’s vision and foreshadow the future of the Final Five. During D’Anna’s vision, McCreary combines the Baltar, Temple of Five, and Roslin/Kobol leitmotifs to shroud the moment in mystery and wonder.

The first leitmotif to occur in this scene is new to *BSG*. McCreary introduced the Temple of Five leitmotif only an episode before D’Anna and Baltar discover the temple in “Rapture” (3.12).⁵⁸ The leitmotif is full of energy and excitement, depicting the Cylon’s joy at finding the temple and building excitement for the revelation of the Final Five. McCreary scored this leitmotif with a dramatic percussion ensemble, including chimes, bells, temple bowls, glass marimbas, tines, and gamelan instruments, to emphasize the intensity and spirituality of the Temple of Five. McCreary described the leitmotif as “mantra-like” and it continues like a heartbeat as D’Anna finally experiences her vision.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Butler, “The Work of Music in the Age of Steel,” 168.

⁵⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 3, episode 12, “Rapture,” directed by Michael Rymer, aired January 21, 2007, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Home Studios Entertainment, 2008), disc 4.

⁵⁹ Bear McCreary, “BG3: Rapture” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, January 26, 2007, accessed August 24, 2019, <http://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg3-rapture/>.

Figure 5: Temple of Five leitmotif⁶⁰



Unlike Temple of Five, the Baltar leitmotif uses harmony and a melancholy melody to evoke the scientist's humanity. Originally occurring in Season 1's "Six Degrees of Separation" (1.07), this minimalistic melody stands as a "musical identity for Baltar's loneliness and misery."⁶¹ As Baltar battles suspicion and finds himself abandoned by Head Six, a soulful Armenian duduk plays the leitmotif.⁶² McCreary employed the duduk throughout *BSG* and found the instrument uniquely suited to the series' soundscape: "I was shocked at how quickly the timbre of the duduk communicated both lyrical melancholy and bittersweet sadness, without being overtly sentimental."⁶³ The small building blocks of the Baltar leitmotif certainly call for melancholy, as the scientist often finds himself despised and alone. In the Temple of Five scene, however, McCreary replaced the duduk with the yayli tanbur, a bowed lute that was commonly used for court music in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁴ The reason for McCreary's shift from the duduk to the yayli tanbur is uncertain, but the timbre of the stringed yayli tanbur is arguably a better fit for the affect of the scene.

⁶⁰ McCreary, "Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt V," *Bear McCreary Official Site*, March 11, 2007, accessed December 11, 2017, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/themes-of-bg-pt-v>.

⁶¹ McCreary, "Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt I." *Battlestar Galactica*, season 1, Episode 7, "Six Degrees of Separation," directed by Michael Angeli, aired February 18, 2005 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 3.

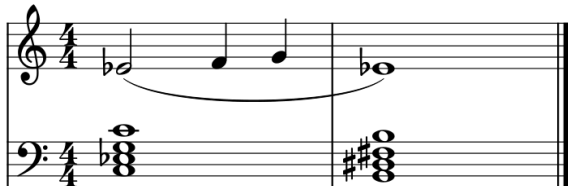
⁶² See glossary for a description of the duduk.

⁶³ McCreary, "Instruments of *Battlestar Galactica*: Duduk."

⁶⁴ See glossary for a description of the yayli tanbur. Eliot Bates, *Music in Turkey: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 43–4.

Furthermore, the harmonic elements of the Baltar leitmotif underline the character's destiny. The leitmotif consists of two chords that allude to a lament: the chordal accompaniment sighs as it descends a half-step from C minor to B major (see Figure 6). This leitmotif embodies David Lewin's SLIDE relations, which he defined as an operation that "preserves the third of a triad while changing its mode."⁶⁵ Associated with neo-Reimannian theory, Lewin introduced SLIDE through a detailed analysis of Wagner's "Tarnhelm" and "Valhalla" leitmotifs in *Götterdämmerung*, highlighting the extra-musical connections between the two and their "relationship which is difficult to express in words."⁶⁶

Figure 6: "Baltar" leitmotif⁶⁷



Much like the connections between Wagner's leitmotifs, McCreary uses the Baltar leitmotif as a building block for future musical relationships. For example, the first four notes of Baltar echo The Shape of Things to Come: the latter reads E-F#-G#-E while the former sits down a half-step (see Figures 6 and 7). This seems to be significant: The Shape of Things to Come appeared five episodes after McCreary introduced the Baltar leitmotif and, as previously explored, it alludes to the scientist's destiny and redemptive arc throughout the character's

⁶⁵ David Lewin, *Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007) 178.

⁶⁶ Ibid. For further details on SLIDE relations, see David Kopp, *Chromatic Transformations in Nineteenth-century Music*, Cambridge Studies in Music Theory and Analysis, 17 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 175.

⁶⁷ McCreary, "Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt II," *Bear McCreary Official Site*, November 10, 2006, accessed December 11, 2017, <http://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/themes-of-battlestar-galactica-pt-ii>. Used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

experience in the Kobol Opera House. We might thus read the upper modulation in as a motivic development of Baltar, depicting the scientist's transformation from anti-hero to promised prophetic leader.

Figure 7: Opening notes of The Shape of Things to Come leitmotif⁶⁸



While McCreary makes subtle changes to the Baltar leitmotif, the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif remains almost identical to its first iteration. The leitmotif initially occurred in “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 1” as the Fleet discovered the mystical planet and featured a boy soprano singing in Latin: “Omnia illa et ante fiebant, Omnia illa et rursus fient” (“All this has happened before, and all this will happen again”).⁶⁹ The melody rises and falls in an exoticized modal scale, full of mystery and wonder with the rising fifths (see Figure 8). McCreary’s choice reinforces the aural world he crafted for *BSG*, which is built around modal scales and sparse instrumentation instead of the bombastic, tonal melodies associated with the space opera subgenre. The leitmotif repeats almost exactly in “Rapture,” though performed by vocalist Raya Yarbrough rather than a boy soprano. Unlike the “Baltar” leitmotif, McCreary makes little to no changes in instrumentation or affect.

⁶⁸ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt IV.” Used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁶⁹ Bear McCreary, “BG3: Rapture,” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, January 26, 2007, accessed August 24, 2019, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg3-rapture/>.

Figure 8: “Roslin/Kobol” leitmotif⁷⁰



Initially associated with Kobol’s discovery, the leitmotif soon became intrinsically tied to President Laura Roslin as the second season progressed. Throughout “Kobol’s Last Gleaming” and Season 2, Roslin’s religious beliefs developed from skepticism to certainty. The spiritual texts, called the *Scrolls of Pythia*, suggest that the promised land of Earth could only be found through the aid of a dying leader.⁷¹ Roslin, suffering from terminal breast cancer, self-identified with this prophesied leader. McCreary confirmed his associations with Kobol and Roslin in his blog: “The mystery of finding Kobol was directly linked to the mystery of Roslin’s undying belief in prophecy.”⁷²

Why, then, would McCreary use a leitmotif tied to Roslin in the Temple of Five scene? The President does not appear in the scene nor is her divine importance mentioned by either D’Anna or Baltar. We can only speculate as to why McCreary chose this particular leitmotif, though he confirms this was an intentional decision in his blog.⁷³ Roslin herself does not appear during D’Anna’s vision, but her intense devotion to divine prophecy mimics that of the Cylon’s pilgrimage to the Temple of Five. Both women—one human and one Cylon—find themselves

⁷⁰ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt II.”

⁷¹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “The Hand of God.”

⁷² McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt II.”

⁷³ Discussing his use of “Roslin/Kobol” in “Rapture”, McCreary writes, “I have used these lyrics once before, during the discovery of Kobol in the first season, and intentionally tried to connect these two moments with music.” McCreary, “BG3: Rapture.”

part of a larger, divine plan and seek knowledge as to their purpose. For Roslin, the discovery of Kobol and subsequent pursuit of Earth seems to fulfill her destiny. D'Anna similarly pursues her fate and, after achieving her goals, dies in a moment of peace and rapture. By using the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif in this moment, McCreary could be hinting at narrative twists yet to come. The producers of *BSG* had not yet mapped out the series finale, but their inclusion of “dying leader” in the prophecy suggests that they always intended Roslin to pass away once she had achieved her goals.⁷⁴ As a result, D'Anna's death directly foreshadows Roslin's death through the use of the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif and stood as a narrative example of the text: “All this has happened before, and all this will happen again.”⁷⁵

The Mad Women

Just as “Rapture” revealed the meaning of the illuminated banners, the Season 3 finale “Crossroads” (3.19–20) emphasized the importance of the final two figures from Baltar's Kobol vision.⁷⁶ The episode opens with a dream: Roslin finds herself wandering the halls of the Opera House and encounters Cylon Number Eight, Sharon “Athena” Agathon. Laughter floats through the air and the women see Athena's daughter Hera running unaccompanied through the halls. As the women grow more alarmed and chase Hera, the child runs to Caprica Six.⁷⁷ Roslin then jolts awake and discovers later that Athena, Hera, and Caprica Six all shared in this collective vision of the Opera House.

⁷⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, “The Hand of God.”

⁷⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Flesh and Bone.”

⁷⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 3, episodes 19, “Crossroads, Part 1,” directed by Michael Rymer, aired March 18, 2007, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2008), disc 6.

Battlestar Galactica, season 3, episode 20, “Crossroads, Part 2,” directed by Michael Rymer, aired March 25, 2007, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2008), disc 6.

⁷⁷ See Appendix A for character descriptions.

Though these dreams are hazy, two figures radiate light: Caprica Six and Hera. The child replaces the cradle that Head Six and Baltar gazed upon, marveling at “the face of the shape of things to come.”⁷⁸ Caprica Six similarly replaces the angelic Head Six in the “Crossroads” Opera House dream. Not only do Caprica Six and Head Six share a face, but they are both clothed in pure white in each subsequent vision. Caprica Six’s role in Baltar’s destiny is yet unknown, but her presence is undeniable.

Before proceeding to the specifics of this dream, we must first review the connections between *BSG* and opera. The show connects to the larger musical genre through the multiple Opera House visions and leitmotifs. Opera is culturally encoded in the viewers of *BSG*’s minds; the general public today has been exposed to a plethora of opera through the mediums like commercials and cartoons. Most of these encode opera as melodramatic, a genre of heightened, exaggerated, hyperemotional, hysterical states. In a word, opera is gendered female.

The feminization of opera reaches back to the era of the castrati. The castrato has been characterized in recent scholarship as a void – a sexless, hollow, emasculated, effeminate performer.⁷⁹ Even though the castrati fell out of vogue, women *en travesti* continued to play important roles in opera. Corrine E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith pointed to the purposeful feminization of these male characters, discussing the popular example of Cherubino in Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*: “The visual and vocal presence in this comic opera of a clearly female singer performing the part of the highly libidinous and ostensibly male page provides, as

⁷⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.”

⁷⁹ Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, “Shunning the Bearded Kiss: Castrati and the Definition of Female Sexuality,” *Prose Studies* 15 (1992): 154. Joseph Roach, “Power’s Body: The Inscription of Morality as Style,” in *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*, ed. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 106.

a matter of course, considerable titillation, much of it intentional.”⁸⁰ Catherine Clément famously argued that nineteenth-century opera dramatized the “undoing of women,” who are so often victimized and fetishized within operatic plots.⁸¹ Ralph P. Locke expanded Clément’s thesis, suggesting that opera is naturally voyeuristic: “the audience is placed in the position of gazing admiringly, sometimes judgmentally, at a woman displaying her attributes.”⁸² Summarizing the gendering of opera, Peter Brooks suggested that the genre is intrinsically linked to melodrama through both body and voice: “The hysterical body is of course typically, from Hippocrates through Freud, a woman’s body, and indeed a victimized woman’s body, on which desire has inscribed an impossible history, a story of desire at an impasse.”⁸³ In identifying these concepts, these operatic scholars all argue the same underlying thesis: opera is inherently gendered female by Western culture. Whether the male characters are gender-bending, the narrative emphasizes the victimized woman, or the entirety of the genre relies on voyeurism and feminine melodrama, opera is gendered.

With this history of opera in mind, we now return to the role of women within *BSG* and the Opera House visions. There is no evidence that the writers intended to evoke specific operatic tropes in *BSG*, but the Opera House clearly calls upon the larger cultural knowledge of opera as feminine, dramatic, and hysterical. In particular, this vision seems to evoke the operatic mad woman. This well-known trope occurs throughout popular culture, such as the colloquialism

⁸⁰ Corinne E. Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith, “Introduction,” *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, Blackmer and Smith, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 10.

⁸¹ Catherine Clément, “Through Voices, History,” *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, Mary Ann Smart, ed. (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 22.

⁸² Ralph P. Locke, “What Are These Women Doing in Opera?” *En Travesti*, Blackmer and Smith, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 65. This concept of voyeurism, particularly the audience’s focus on women and the “male gaze,” has a long history in film theory as well.

⁸³ Peter Brooks, “Body and Voice in Melodrama and Opera,” in *Siren Songs*, 120–121.

“It’s not over until the fat lady sings” or cinematic allusions. In the cult-classic space opera *The Fifth Element*, for example, the Diva Plavalaguna sings Lucia’s mad aria in a moment of heightened drama.⁸⁴ Science fiction lovers might not realize that they are watching a typical operatic mad scene unfold but they learn to equate the hyperemotional female with an insecure mental state and exaggerated coloratura.

In *BSG*, the Opera House visions draw upon audience associations and create three difference archetypes of the operatic mad woman. Roslin, for example, initially seems the antithesis of a mad woman but her sanity soon erodes. As she grapples with her newfound responsibilities as President throughout the first season, she struggles to hide her breast cancer diagnosis by relying on hallucinogenic drugs. Roslin’s dependence on them grows and in moments of withdrawal her reason erodes as she fails to recognize those around her and frantically mutters about prophecies under her breath.⁸⁵

A strong matriarchal figure on *BSG*, Roslin’s credibility suffers a fatal blow in “Crossroads, Part 1” – the same episode in which she first has an Opera House vision. Standing in the Galactica CIC (the Combat Information Center), Roslin demands to see Caprica Six and states that “she has a feeling” the Cylon would do anything to protect Hera.⁸⁶ The men surrounding her scoff at this vague comment while Captain Lee “Apollo” Adama sniffs at her coffee cup. Soon thereafter, Roslin sits as a trial witness and rationally presents her argument before being cross-examined by the opposing team led by Apollo:

APOLLO: During your illness, what sort of medication were you on?

ROSLIN: I was taking a lot of medications at the time and I don't remember all their names.

⁸⁴ *The Fifth Element*, directed by Luc Besson, (Gaumont, May 7, 1997), DVD (1997).

⁸⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 2, episode 3, “Fragged,” directed by Sergio Mimica-Gezzan, aired July 29, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Home Studios Entertainment, 2005), disc 1.

⁸⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Crossroads, Part 1.” See glossary.

APOLLO: Did you take something called chamalla extract?

ROSLIN: Hm. Yes.

APOLLO: Isn't it true that one of the side effects of taking chamalla is a propensity to experience hallucinations?

ROSLIN: Yes, that is one of the possible side effects of chamalla.

APOLLO: And isn't it also true that the visions that you once described as messages from the gods were actually the result of a pharmacological reaction from taking chamalla?... If she is on drugs it goes to her credibility as a witness.⁸⁷

In this brief moment, Apollo calls Roslin's authority, credibility, and even sanity into question. She no longer appears presidential, but displays the irrational, hallucinatory behavior of an operatic madwoman.

The Cylon Athena similarly degenerates into an operatic mad woman. Athena experiences the same with the Opera House visions; unlike Roslin, however, Athena's panic for Hera's safety comes from her traumatic history with her daughter. A Cylon captive on Galactica, Athena spent the majority of her pregnancy incarcerated and her unborn child posed an unknown threat to the Fleet. As a result, Roslin commanded the Galactica doctor to terminate Athena's pregnancy (a decision she later reversed) and had the child kidnapped upon birth, declared dead, and raised in secret. Only after proving her allegiance to the Fleet does Athena discover the truth and recover her child. Athena's frantic concern for Hera, then, arises from a brutal past of deception. Furthermore, her panic in the Opera House dream related to her sense of identity, humanity, and purpose. Robert W. Moore argued in his detailed analysis of Athena's personhood that her identity is intrinsically tied to love and motherhood.⁸⁸ Juliana Hu Pegues furthered this concept, arguing that Athena fulfills the role of Cio-Cio-San in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* by

⁸⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Crossroads, Part 1."

⁸⁸ Robert W. Moore, "'To Be a Person': Sharon Agathon and the Social Expression of Individuality," in *Cylons in America*, 113–114.

sacrificing her well-being and identity for that of her child.⁸⁹ Without Hera, Sharon is bereft of humanity.

The overprotective mother archetype has a long history in opera and often leads to correlations between motherhood and madness.⁹⁰ Opera scholars have written much on this subject. Michel Poizat, for example, suggested that the voice often functions as a “voice-object” in opera, drawing attention away from narrative, scenery, and more due to its extreme power and emotion.⁹¹ In defense of his argument, Poizat cited perhaps the best-known mad mother in opera, Mozart’s Queen of the Night (*Die Zauberflöte*). In his analysis of the Queen’s second aria, “Der Hölle Rache,” Poizat argued that the voice-object sounds like a series of piercing cries similar to those depicted by philosopher Jacques Lacan.⁹² The Lacanian cry, filled with excess emotion, fits the larger cultural knowledge of opera as hyperemotional and melodramatic. Carolyn Abbate expanded on Poizat’s claims, asserting that the Queen becomes an “irrational nonbeing” during this aria.⁹³ Kristi Brown-Montesano examination of the Queen of the Night suggested a new reading of the hyperemotional aria. The Queen’s cries are evidence not only of her gender, but of her complicated relationship with motherhood: “Pinning down the Queen hermeneutically is not easy, especially because she presents two seemingly incompatible “faces” in her two arias. The first time we see her she is a bereft mother pining for her stolen daughter; when she reappears, she is a jealous matriarch who breaks off relations with this same cherished child, screaming

⁸⁹ Pegues, “Miss Cylon: Empire and Adoption in ‘Battlestar Galactica’,” 203–4.

⁹⁰ See Bellini’s *Norma*, Strauss’s *Clytemnestra*, or Puccini’s *Ciocio-San*.

⁹¹ Michel Poizat, *L’Opéra ou le cri de l’ange* (Paris: A. M. Métailié, 1986), 98–100.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 11. See also Carolyn Abbate, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 86.

threats of revenge.”⁹⁴ Brown-Montesano later concludes that the Queen’s fiery aria is not meant to break ties with her daughter Pamina as many assume, but is rather intended as a fight for their survival.⁹⁵ The Queen is not a villain but a victim, a dispossessed matriarch stuck in a society that diminished her power and negated her significance.

Athena Agathon shares many similarities with Mozart’s feisty mother. Like the Queen, Athena’s existence revolves around her daughter, but her power is stifled. The humans on Galactica remain suspicious of Athena throughout the first couple seasons, assuming that she is using her pregnancy to manipulate and kill the humans. As a result of their suspicions, they temper Athena’s power by placing her in a heavily-guarded cell and stealing away Hera. Athena despairs, fights, and manipulates others (much like the Queen uses Tamino) to get her daughter back. She often screams for Hera, reminiscent of the Queen’s Lacanian cry. The humans of Galactica see a mad Cylon, but Athena is simply a mother doing everything she can to reunite with her daughter.

Both Roslin’s and Athena’s perceived insanity escalates over the series and reaches its pinnacle within the Opera House visions. The two women find themselves separated from Hera and wield their voices with increasing power to summon the lost child. But the child does not understand, hear, or care. In the Opera House, as Baltar and Caprica Six close the hall doors, the women’s voices are powerless. Clément described a similar occurrence in operatic mad scenes:

A frantic, abandoned madwoman, her body displayed before an audience glued to their seats, she sings words that make sense only to her. That is called delirium, an ‘unreading’... The madwomen who sing are stubborn and determined in their song, and their intertwining voices scale the walls of reason, reaching higher than what is sensible, far higher than reality.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Kristi Brown-Montesano, *Understanding the Women of Mozart’s Operas* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 83.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 97–8.

⁹⁶ Clément, “Through Voices, History,” 87–8.

The soundtrack underpinning Roslin's and Athena's desperate pleas similarly underlines their helplessness and lack of voice. Instead of setting the women's frenzy with pertinent leitmotifs, McCreary leaves the sonic landscape open, opting for subtle drones and feminine choral wailing. Describing his choice, McCreary wrote in his blog that he "chose to bombard the viewer with a chaotic choir singing angular clusters. Wailing electric violin and dissonant synthesizers were also tucked into the texture."⁹⁷ The lack of words in the music during their vision emphasizes the truth of the Opera House: no matter how much Roslin and Athena yell, their words are meaningless. By all appearances, these women are mad.

Athena's perceived hysteria as a mother and Roslin's assumed insanity as a disgraced matriarch represent two different incarnations of the operatic madwoman, but Caprica Six (as well as her non-corporeal counterpart Head Six) embody the stereotype through their overt sexuality.⁹⁸ Viewers first meet the Number Six model in the opening scene of the *BSG* miniseries as she dramatically seduces a Colonial Fleet officer before murdering him. Number Six later appears on the colony Caprica and reveals her illicit relationship with Gaius Baltar; Moore's *Series Bible* described their liaisons in detail:

[Caprica Six] was beautiful, intensely sexual, funny, smart, and with an intuitive sense of Baltar's every mood and thought...She knew he also liked aggressive women in the bedroom, so she made a habit of pouncing on him. She understood how secret affairs both titillated and challenged him...Their personal life revolved around pushing the boundaries of sexual experience."⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Bear McCreary, "BG3: 'Crossroads, Part 1'," *Bear McCreary Official Site*, March 18, 2007, accessed July 13, 2019, <http://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg3-crossroads-part-i/>

⁹⁸ See Appendix A.

⁹⁹ Moore, *Battlestar Galactica: Series Bible*, 39.

Caprica Six is not a demure ingenue, but rather a bold, sexually-confidant woman. Baltar's hallucination, Head Six, possesses the same traits. The Sixes' promiscuity remained a key feature of *BSG*: Head Six wears a revealing, skin-tight, provocative red dress throughout Season 1 and regularly engages in public intercourse with Baltar. Furthermore, both Head Six and Caprica Six rarely separated narratively from Baltar, which highlighted their character dependence on seduction and reinforced the frustratingly brief description of the Number Six personality in Moore's *Bible*: "The Woman as Machine."¹⁰⁰

The trope of the hypersexual female runs through numerous genres and dates back centuries. In *The Female Malady*, Elaine Showalter described the perception of madness in the nineteenth-century as a "manifestation of excess feminine sexuality."¹⁰¹ Michel Foucault analyzed the theatricalization of madness during the Age of Reason, suggesting insanity was used as a form of entertainment.¹⁰² In the groundbreaking *Feminine Endings*, Susan McClary linked these concepts through her study of operatic mad scenes.¹⁰³ McClary argued that sexuality often develops as a key element of madness in opera, using the mental deterioration of Donizetti's Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*, 1835) and Strauss's Salome (*Salome*, 1905) as prime examples. In particular, McClary noted that the women's excess of sexuality emerged in their music: diatonicism and lyricism transformed into "coloratura delirium" and a "collaged

¹⁰⁰ Moore, *Battlestar Galactica: Series Bible*, 29.

¹⁰¹ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 81. Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

¹⁰² Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

¹⁰³ McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 80–1.

fantasia.”¹⁰⁴ Reality slipped away from these mad women as unchallenged eroticism lead to “a realm of fantasy, illusion, nostalgia, unreason, or the sublime.”¹⁰⁵

The transition from reality to fantasy begins in Roslin’s dreams but unfolds most clearly in the final vision of the Opera House in “Crossroads, Part 2” which unexpectedly transpires from Caprica Six’s point of view.¹⁰⁶ The camera pans in on Caprica Six’s exposed back as she lies sleeping. Even now, in her unconscious state, the camera focuses on her latent sexuality. The scene shifts to the Cylon’s dream and viewers find themselves standing once more in the hall of the Opera House. Caprica Six holds Hera and stands alongside Baltar as “The Shape of Things to Come” passacaglia returns. The Opera House leitmotif soon corrupts, however, as McCreary layers the descending line with tonal clusters and the chaotic vocal line first heard accompanying Roslin’s and Athena’s hysteria. As in Lucia’s famous mad scene, the wordless female choir wails, transcending speech and abandoning the strict passacaglia structure for a delirious collage of forms. Caprica Six stands in the Opera House—clothed in a provocative, nearly see-through white dress—as the music betrays her terror and confusion.

These visions in “Crossroads” depict three of *BSG*’s leading ladies seemingly on the brink of madness. Although linked together in their collective dreams, each of these women presents a different variation on the trope of feminine madness. Athena, the frantic mother, abandons her military training out of desperation to save her child. By contrast, Roslin finds herself discredited after using hallucinatory drugs and questions the purpose of the visions. Both Caprica Six and Head Six start as alluring and charismatic but descend into the stereotype of the promiscuous madwoman. These layers of madness combined with the frenzied, disjointed music

¹⁰⁴ McClary, *Feminine Endings*, 92.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁰⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Crossroads, Part 2.”

of the “Crossroads” Opera House visions further underline the inherent “operaticness” of *BSG*. The women’s visions are the show’s mad scenes, occurring at the tail-end of Season 3 and setting up a spectacular series finale in the fourth and final season.

***BSG*: The Opera**

Following the series finale, one question resonated through the *BSG* fandom: why an Opera House?¹⁰⁷ Introduced in Season 1, the mysterious theater dominated the series’ narrative and created tantalizing cliffhangers. The writers layered the Opera House throughout the entirety of *BSG*. Season 1’s “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2” introduced the theater through Baltar’s perspective. In Season 3, “Rapture” and “Crossroads” transferred the operatic visions to women. All four—Baltar, Roslin, Athena, and Caprica Six—unite in the series finale to finally “understand the truth of the Opera House.”¹⁰⁸ Under attack from enemy Cylons, Hera runs through the halls of Galactica with both Athena and Roslin chasing after her. In a moment of epiphany, the stunned women see their vision coming to fruition. Caprica Six and Baltar find Hera and scoop her up, taking her to safety as strains of the passacaglia accompany their actions. The leitmotif grows louder and stronger as Baltar, Caprica Six, and Hera reach the CIC – the heart of Galactica.¹⁰⁹ It is in this control room that the mystery is finally understood as Baltar realizes that the CIC is the Opera House and all three illuminated elements from his vision in “Kobol’s Last Gleaming” are present.

¹⁰⁷ The comment sections in many *BSG* finale recaps, for example, are filled with debate over the purpose and need of the Opera House. Chris Dahlen, “*Battlestar Galactica*: ‘Daybreak (pt. 2)’,” *A.V. Club*, March 20, 2009, <https://tv.avclub.com/battlestar-galactica-daybreak-pt-2-1798205876>

¹⁰⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4, episode 6, “Faith,” directed by Michael Nankin, aired May 9, 2008, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 3.

¹⁰⁹ See glossary for a description of the CIC.

This dramatic finale unites the operatic elements strewn throughout *BSG* and reasserts the “operaticness” of the show. I would suggest that the finale also offers a new lens through which to view the series. I posit that the *BSG* writers unintentionally created an opera, integrating operatic elements throughout the narrative, cinematography, and music. Galactica serves as the operatic stage on which these characters play, as the climactic scene in the CIC reveals. We might even venture more specific operatic analogies with *BSG*. The show pulls its narrative from Biblical and mythological sources, uses a three-act structure, employs leitmotifs, marshals the trope of the madwoman, and features an actual Opera House. Baltar, the over-sexualized but surprisingly feminine antihero could be viewed as the castrato of this production. His prima donna, Number Six, is similarly sexualized and uses her voice to both support (Caprica Six) and manipulate (Head Six).

I am not the first to suggest that film could be considered opera. Composer Howard Shore once famously said that “opera *is* film music” and used his score for Peter Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* as an example: “The *Lord of the Rings* is an opera in concept. And what I mean is, it’s three acts. It’s three films. And it has the complexity and the relationships of what we think of as opera music, because it so goes beyond what you think of as a film score.”¹¹⁰ Indeed, film has often been analyzed as an opera. Both Citron and Franco Sciannameo, for example, viewed Coppola’s *Godfather* trilogy—which also ends in an opera house—through an operatic lens, noting the epic narrative needed to make such comparisons.¹¹¹ A television series perhaps affords even greater temptations to the operatic imagination, since it provides multiple seasons to build

¹¹⁰ Michael Schelle, *The Score: Interviews with Film Composers* (Beverly Hills, CA: Silman-James Press, 1999), 341, 347, as found in Brititzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif*, 261.

¹¹¹ Marcia Citron, “Operatic Style and Structure in Coppola’s *Godfather* Trilogy,” *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 3, (Oct., 2004): 423–67. Franco Sciannameo, Nino Rota’s *The Godfather Trilogy: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010).

epic grandeur and complexity. New Space Opera, a sub-genre devoted to providing social awareness and hyper-emotionality, provides the opportunity to be even more intricately connected to opera.

Perhaps calling it an opera is a step too far – the television show is not sung throughout and its creators laid no claim to the genre. Yet its inherent “operaticness” cannot be denied. Moore wanted to “take the opera out of space opera” and remove the melodramatic, formulaic aspects of the sub-genre. Nevertheless, the narrative importance of the Opera House throughout all four seasons of *BSG* forges a deep connection to the musical genre. Its mere presence, combined with the leitmotivic soundtrack and mad women, profoundly impacted this New Space Opera. The operatic nature of *BSG* revolutionized televised space opera, which resulted in a show unlike any other science fiction series.

Chapter 2: Frakking Toasters

Oddly, for a science fiction series, *BSG* has no aliens. Instead, the show pits machine against human. Season 1 advertises this opposition with the title cards that introduce each episode: “The Cylons Were Created by Man. They Rebelled. They Evolved. They Look and Feel Human. Some are programmed to think they are Human. There are many copies. And they have a Plan.”¹ From the beginning, these ominous words paint the Cylons as nefarious enemies bent on humanity’s destruction. The Colonial Fleet clearly views the Cylons as evil. In “Flesh and Bone” (1.08), for example, the *Galactica* pilot Starbuck confesses to the Cylon Leoben that Cylons were humanity’s one great mistake: “We created you. Us. It was a stupid, frakked-up decision, and we have paid for it.”² With this brief admission, Starbuck sums up the apparently irreconcilable opposition between a beneficent humanity and its malevolent machine counterparts.

The uncomfortable echoes of colonialist discourse in this opposition have not gone unremarked by critics of *BSG*. In a scathing critique, Christopher Deis noted that “the Cylons are a carefully constructed Other,” akin to the ferocious Eastern potentates and seductresses that haunted the European imagination.³ Deis was referring, of course, to the influential theory of alterity deriving from Edward Said’s foundational postcolonialist study, *Orientalism* (1978). Said described “Othering” as a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority

¹ This opening sequence first appears in “33” and reoccurs through the rest of the season. It then changes to “The Cylons Were Created by Man. They Rebelled. They Look and Feel Human. There are many copies. And they have a Plan...” for the second season. *Battlestar Galactica*, season 1, episode 1, “33,” directed by Michael Rymer, aired January 14, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 2.

² *Battlestar Galactica*, “Flesh and Bone.”

³ Deis, “Erasing Difference,” 157.

over the Orient.”⁴ Orientalism functions as a colonial discourse that distinguishes an imaginary East from the Western colonial powers, a binary that extends to race, gender, and class. Said’s critique rapidly spread to other disciplines, including film studies. Particularly relevant for this study is Ziauddin Sardar’s *Orientalism* (1999), which extended postcolonial theorizing to the social sciences and popular culture, noting Othering within Hollywood codes of representation.⁵ Julie Codell and Dianne Sachko transposed the theory of alterity to cultural theory, while Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter studied its entrenchment within the disciplines of history and political science.⁶ In feminist theory, Majda Yegenoglu explored deeper correlations between Orientalism and the sexualization of the Other.⁷ Sheila Burney further asserted that this mentality perpetuates a “Western gaze” that, much like the gendered male gaze of film theory, “subjectifies and objectifies all that it sees in its own image, through its own colored lenses, and from its own position of power.”⁸ Strikingly, the voyeuristic male gaze combines with the objectified Western gaze when applied to “exotic” women, resulting in a dual gaze that Others on multiple levels.

Postcolonialist critique also voyaged into the distant reaches of science fiction studies, where it underwent a most fascinating transformation. The theory enters a complex world in which, while humanity opposes aliens or machines, differences within the human race still remain. Sandra Govan brought Orientalist studies to the analysis of the genre: “Science fiction

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 3.

⁵ Ziauddin Sardar, *Orientalism, Concepts in the Social Sciences* (Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 1999), 95–135.

⁶ Julie F. Codell and Dianne Sachko Macleod, eds., *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998); Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter, eds., *Imperialism and Orientalism: A Documentary Sourcebook* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1999).

⁷ Meyda Yegenoglu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁸ Shehla Burney, “Orientalism: The Making of the Other,” *Counterpoints* 417 (2012): 26. Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen (London)* 16, no. 3 (1975): 6–18.

implies that the knots of terrestrial racism will eventually loosen because Terrans will have to unite against aliens, androids, and BEMs [bug-eyed monsters] of the galaxy. Under these circumstances, humans become remarkable for their humanity, not their ethnicity.”⁹ Indeed, this separation between humanity and the alien Other traces a key tenet of science fiction: what does it mean to be human? The answer to this question lies not only in humanity’s decisions, but in their inherent differences from aliens and machines as well. Furthermore, as Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin wrote in their foundational study *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision* (1977), the genre evolved to the point at which race was “not remarkable in any way.”¹⁰ De Witt Douglas Kilgore refuted these utopian claims, however, arguing that race will always impact science fiction:

Perhaps the great challenge or potential of contemporary science fiction is to imagine political/social futures in which race does not simply wither away but is transformed, changing into something different and perhaps unexpected. This would require paying attention to an actual history of race (and racism) in which what constitutes the Other and the Self is always under revision.¹¹

Kilgore’s argument suggests that race is still a factor in science fiction, even if the genre envision a future free from racism.

In *BSG*, we can observe the Othering and racialization of the Cylons through the Colonial Fleet’s remarks about the machines. The human remnant initially views the Cylons as purely evil and curses and mocks them. Since the original Cylon model consisted of chrome and had slits for eyes, humans mocked the Cylons as “toasters,” or most damningly as “frakking toasters,” even

⁹ Sandra Y. Govan, “The Insistent Presence of Black Folk in the Novels of Samuel R. Delany,” *Black American Literature Forum* 18.2 (1984): 44.

¹⁰ Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin, *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 188.

¹¹ De Witt Douglas Kilgore, “Difference Engine: Aliens, Robots, and Other Racial Matters in the History of Science Fiction,” *Science Fiction Studies* 37, no. 1 (March, 2010): 17.

though some Cylons were now indistinguishable from humans.¹² The racist undertones of the T-word emerge in “Resistance” (2.04), in which Galen Tyrol, a Galactica worker, is arrested under suspicion of being a Cylon. His colleague Cally pleads for help from the scientist Baltar, who is attempting to create a machine that can distinguish human from Cylon.¹³ Adding to the complication of the moment, Head Six comments on the conversation to Baltar as it occurs:

CALLY: I’ve known the chief for years. He’s no Toaster!

BALTAR: He was involved with Lieutenant Valerii, who most certainly is a Toaster.

HEAD SIX: That word is racist! I don’t like it!

CALLY: Sure, he’s shown some bad judgment getting involved with her. But that doesn’t mean he’s a Toaster. You’ve got to help him.

HEAD SIX: Say something, Gaius. Tell her you won’t have racial epithets used in your presence!¹⁴

Strikingly, Head Six is a white woman, indeed, a platinum blonde – an atypical target of a racial slur. The narrative further underlines that epithets used against the Cylons diverge from the human construction of race, as the humans had only encountered four of the twelve Cylons thus far.¹⁵ Of these four Cylons revealed to the Colonial Fleet (Two, Five, Six, and Eight), three are white. In being anthropocentric, humanity is being racist.

The music of *BSG* accentuates the unification of humanity across modern constructions of racial lines. As discussed in Chapter 1, the soundscape of *BSG* diverges from the standard televised space opera through McCreary’s use of Asian and Middle Eastern instrumentation and aversion to traditional harmonic progressions. Indeed, McCreary uses an amalgamation of instruments.¹⁶ Although McCreary often challenged himself to feature new instruments, many

¹² “Frak” was the writers’ clever way of subverting cable censorship, as all characters regularly curse “Frak” in displeasure.

¹³ See Appendix A for character descriptions.

¹⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, Season 2, Episode 4, “Resistance,” directed by Alan Kroeker, aired August 5, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Home Studios Entertainment, 2005), disc 1.

¹⁵ See Appendix A.

¹⁶ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt IV.”

episodes of *BSG* include a mixture of taiko drums from Japan, Balinese gamelan from Indonesia, the duduk from Armenia, the erhu from China, and the yayli tanbur from Turkey.¹⁷ Returning to Papanikolaou's astute claim that McCreary played with science fiction conventions by encoding Western instruments as exotic, which was discussed in the previous chapter, we must note that the orchestra rarely enters *BSG*'s soundscape.¹⁸ In using a wide array of instruments from a multitude of countries, McCreary seemingly uses music to underline the loosened "knots of terrestrial racism" in *BSG*.¹⁹

This chapter explores Othering in *BSG*, taking particular note of McCreary's soundtrack. Specifically, this chapter analyzes the series' failure to portray a humanity united across racial lines and its successes in Othering the Cylons. First, we observe the show's attempts, and ultimate failure, to erase racial difference in favor of the opposition of humanity and machine. As we shall see, the music is partially responsible, if unintentionally, for this failure. Next, this chapter explores how the soundtrack distinguishes humanity from the Cylons through timbre and instrumentation, displaying a rich diversity within the human characters while portraying the machines as a faceless mass. Finally, this chapter discusses the use of melody, form, and rhythm in the human and Cylon leitmotifs, analyzing the stark dichotomy between them. In doing so, this chapter grapples with the implications of Otherness in *BSG*'s universe, analyzing the anthropocentrism in the show's music that McCreary amplified to create tension between the warring factions. This chapter ultimately aims to contribute to larger discussions of race and Otherness in the music of science fiction, particularly relating to the antagonism between human and non-human.

¹⁷ See glossary for descriptions of these instruments.

¹⁸ Papanikolaou, "Of Duduks and Dylan," 227.

¹⁹ Govan, "The Insistent Presence of Black Folk in the Novels of Samuel R. Delany," 44.

The Racial Other

Although science fiction has long sought to erase race in hopes of presenting an inclusive and diverse future, the “color-blind” casting of science-fiction television series has a tumultuous history. Only two of the seven main characters in *Star Trek: The Original Series*, for example, are people of color: Japanese American George Takei played helmsman Hikaru Sulu and African American Nichelle Nichols played communications officer Nyota Uhura. Nichols’s character in particular was groundbreaking, as Uhura was one of the first major televised roles for a black woman. The pressure on Nichols was immense, and she considered quitting after getting numerous other offers. In a 2011 retrospective with NPR correspondent Michel Martin, Nichols described how Martin Luther King Jr. convinced her to stay on the show:

I looked across the way and there was the face of Dr. Martin Luther King smiling at me and walking toward me. And he started laughing. By the time he reached me, he said, “Yes, Ms. Nichols, I am your greatest fan. I am that Trekkie... We don't need you to march. You are marching. You are reflecting what we are fighting for...For the first time, we are being seen the world over as we should be seen.” He says, “Do you understand that this is the only show that my wife Coretta and I will allow our little children to stay up and watch?” I was speechless.²⁰

Nichols’s decision to stay with *Star Trek* later led to a revolutionary scene in the 1968 episode “Plato’s Stepchildren” (3.10). In this episode, Uhura and Captain Kirk (William Shatner) share the first televised interracial kiss. This moment epitomizes the pursuit of racial erasure in science fiction: though they are different ethnicities, Uhura and Kirk remain united through their common humanity.

²⁰ Michel Martin, host, “*Star Trek*’s Uhura Reflects on MLK Encounter,” Tell Me More (podcast), January 17, 2011, accessed June 22, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2011/01/17/132942461/Star-Treks-Uhura-Reflects-On-MLK-Encounter>.

And yet, problematic racialized narratives and representations still existed and were reinforced by the accompanying soundtracks. In the *Star Trek* franchise, for example, many of the antagonists are dark-skinned. The supernatural, godlike alien characters, however, most often have light skin. Daniel Bernardi astutely noted this representation in the *Star Trek* franchise, exploring how science fiction grounds the future in our present:

Aliens, for example, can be said to be always already real world peoples—signifiers of nations, cultures, and identities—simply because there are no real space-time referents for living and embodied extraterrestrials...Science fiction’s regime of verisimilitude, its unique spin on the codes of Hollywood realism, draws upon and engages sociopolitical history in order to construct a frightening or an ideal future.²¹

Although science fiction seeks to portray utopian and dystopian futures apart from modern times, most unintentionally carry the burden of our racially charged present.

We can find this disturbing pattern within alien music as well. Tracing the issues with racialized music in *Star Trek*, Tim Summers crucially argued that “alien identities are created either through generic musical signifiers of the exoticized ‘Other’ or through reference to particular real-world identities.”²² Summers focused in particular on the Klingons, a dark-skinned, humanoid warrior species that served as antagonists throughout the original *Star Trek* series and several of its film sequels. He noted that their first musical appearance was effectively alienating:

Harmonic dislocation is created by using all twelve chromatic pitches, as a tone-row. The angularity of the melody combines serial hermeticism with visceral gestures enhanced by *marcato*, dry timbres. The low register occupies a ‘masculine’ vocal range and contributes a less distinct sense of pitch – it is more sonically mysterious, while the percussive element demonstrates the militaristic dimension of the Klingons’ identity.²³

²¹ Daniel Leonard Bernardi, *Star Trek and History: Race-ing Toward a White Future* (New Brunswick, NJ; London: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 12.

²² Tim Summers, “*Star Trek* and the Musical Depiction of Alien Other,” *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 7, no. 1 (Spring, 2013): 20.

²³ Summers, *Star Trek* and the Musical Depiction of Alien Other,” 34.

Summers then went on to analyze the continued alterity of the Klingon's musical identity throughout the sequel films, noting the effective Othering by each of the composers for this species. That this species is played primarily by black actors shows an alarming racial divide in a supposedly utopian future.

Many subsequent science fiction television shows continued to lack diversity within their main casts. For example, the popular British show *Doctor Who* began airing in 1963 and ran until 1989, added a movie to the canon in 1996, and started anew in 2005. Despite the show's decades-long run, the first person of color as a main character came only in 2007 with Martha Jones, a one-season companion played by the Iranian-Ghanian-English Freema Agyeman. Aside from the recurring characters Mickey Smith (played by Trinidadian-English Noel Clarke) and Danny Pink (played by Irish-Jamaican-English Samuel Anderson), *Doctor Who* continued another decade until the next BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) main character, Bill Potts (played by West Indian-English Pearl Mackie), in 2017. To this day there still has not been a Doctor of color, although Season 12 briefly introduced Ruth, a black woman, as a Doctor from the past who had been forgotten. The 1978 *BSG* similarly lacked diversity, as the show included only two characters of color, Lieutenant Boomer (African-American Herbert Jefferson Jr.) and Colonel Tigh (African-American-Dominican-Argentinian Terry Carter).

Science fiction television shows continued to oscillate between fulfilling and failing the genre's idealistic outlook on human race in the future. *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-94) and *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001), for example, began to remedy the lack of diversity, including characters like Geordi La Forge (LaVar Burton), Worf (Michael Dorn), Guinan (Whoopi Goldberg), Tuvok (Tim Russ) and Harry Kim (Garrett Wang). *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (1993-99) continued the franchise's influential run by casting Benjamin Sisko as Avery

Brooks, the Captain. *Babylon 5*, however, only included one BIPOC (Dr. Stephen Franklin, played by the African-American actor Richard Biggs) in the seventeen main characters. This is particularly surprising, as the many new characters entered over the show's five season run. Similarly, Teal'c (Christopher Judge) in *Stargate SG-1* (1997-2007) was the only person of color of the nine main characters.

Breaking away from the primarily white casts of the 1990s, the reinvented *BSG* featured a diverse cast. In the main cast, Mexican-American Edward James Olmos played the stoic Commander Adama and Korean-Canadian-American Grace Park is the naive Sharon "Boomer" Valerii, who later discovers her identity as Cylon Number Eight. As recurring characters, Chinese-Italian-Canadian Alessandro Juliani is the neurotic, politically-minded Felix Gaeta, South African Kandyse McClure plays the charming Anastasia Dualla, Indo-Canadian Rekha Sharma is the shrewd political Tory Foster, and African-American Ricky Worth is Dr. Simon O'Neill. This diversity could arguably speak to Kilgore's assertion that race will always impact science fiction, if only to show that racism could cease to exist as humanity unites against an opposing force. Moreover, *BSG* seems to exist in a pre-racial universe.²⁴ The Colonial Fleet is made up of the remnants of twelve planetary colonies: Aerilon, Aquaria, Canceron, Caprica, Gemenon, Leonis, Libran, Picon, Sagittaron, Scorpia, Tauron, and Virgon. The writers demarcate each of these colonies through their social and economic status, rather than the ethnicity of its people.

At the same time, consideration of character development and narrative arcs of the characters portrayed by actors of color on *BSG* betrays the complex impact of race. *BSG*, like

²⁴ I say pre-racial here, as the series finale "Daybreak, Part 3" confirms that *BSG* takes place in Earth's past, rather than its future.

Star Trek before it, ultimately restructured modern experiences. Furthermore, the audiences were still viewing these characters through a racial lens and longstanding stereotypes of race in U.S. popular culture. For example, the 1987 documentary *Ethnic Notions* details the long and charged racial history in the United States and the roles played by representations of African Americans in popular culture to uphold white supremacy.²⁵ The documentary argued that caricatures were a way to navigate the contradiction of racial inequities in a nation founded on equality. *Ethnic Notions* underlined this thesis by following the progression of particular caricatures, such as Jim Crow, which was never intended as a truthful image but ultimately perpetuated a stereotype. Science fiction, and *BSG* by extension, walks this delicate tightrope: the genre seeks to erase race, but audience preconceptions based on racial caricatures and stereotypes, I posit, ultimately undermine this utopian construct. Furthermore, the casting of people of color in “colorblind” roles invariably leads to ethnic comparisons between the actor and the character, regardless of the writers’ intentions.

Commander William Adama presents perhaps the most telling example of ethnic comparisons between actor and role. Played by Mexican-American Edward James Olmos, Adama is one of the only characters played by a person of color to stay alive throughout the series, as Dualla commits suicide and Gaeta is executed after an attempted mutiny. Yet Olmos’s heritage seems to be erased in *BSG*, as he is coded “white” through the casting of his son Apollo. Caucasian actor Jamie Bamber plays Lee “Apollo” Adama, and as a result, two important changes were made to the actors’ appearance: Bamber’s blonde hair was dyed brown and Olmos wore blue contact lenses (see Figure 9). The music associated with Adama further whitens

²⁵ Marlon T. Riggs and Esther Rolle, *Ethnic Notions*, Films On Demand, 1987, accessed June 26, 2020, <https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=98132&xtid=49775>.

Olmos. Instead of using the typical *BSG* soundscape dominantly comprised of Asian and Middle Eastern instrumentation, McCreary always incorporates Irish and Celtic instruments, which typically conjure images of a white rural countryside.

Figure 9: The Adamas²⁶



This is not the first time that Olmos's Latino heritage has been disguised. In the science fiction cult classic *Blade Runner* (1982), Olmos played Officer Gaff, who was intended to represent the Asian ruling class chasing down "replicants," or bioengineered humanoids much like the Cylons. The film takes place in Los Angeles, but its culture is undeniably Asian; *Time* film critic Richard Corliss describes the scene as "a Japanized nighttown of sleaze and silicon, fetid steam and perpetual rain."²⁷ Brian Locke analyzed the film's racial tensions and noted how

²⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, "The Hand of God."

²⁷ Richard Corliss, "The Pleasure of Texture," Review of *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott, *Time* (July 12, 1982): 68 as found in Brian Locke, "White and 'Black' versus Yellow: Metaphor and *Blade Runner*'s Racial Politics," *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 65, no. 4 (Winter, 2009): 133.

Gaff was originally intended to represent the antagonistic Japanese ruling class, despite being played by a Latino actor: “In the film, Gaff does appear to be mixed race. The shooting script, however, makes it clear that his identity was originally conceived as unambiguously Asian. Gaff has much more dialogue than remains in the film cut, but not a word of it is in English.”²⁸ Locke goes on to note that the 1981 script described Gaff as a “short Japanese guy” and the 1982 press release still described him as “a multilingual bureaucrat with Oriental skin, Japanese eyes, and blue irises.”²⁹ Although *BSG* does not conceal Olmos’s Latino appearance as dramatically as *Blade Runner*, the production still altered his appearance in attempts to “de-Other” Olmos.

The writers and producers of *BSG* ultimately failed to create a world devoid of racial divides. Of the six credited characters of color in *BSG*, half are Cylons. Number Eight (main cast), Foster (supporting cast), and O’Neill (recurring cast) are all Cylons. The women, in particular, are especially tragic characters. Number Eight has two principal iterations, Sharon “Athena” Agathon and Sharon “Boomer” Valerii.³⁰ Athena always knew she was a Cylon and was tasked with seducing her future husband, Karl “Helo” Agathon. As Athena fell in love with Helo—a white, human male—she transitioned from temptress to ingénue. Boomer, by contrast, traces an opposing arc from naïve lover to femme fatale. Boomer and Foster share an important and tragic commonality, in which both learned of their Cylon identities after living for some time as sleeper agents. Entering a Cylon basestar to deploy a nuclear weapon, Boomer finds herself

²⁸ Locke, “White and ‘Black’ versus Yellow,” 134.

²⁹ William M. Kolb, “Bladerunner Film Notes,” in *Retrofitting Bladerunner: Issues in Ridley Scott’s Bladerunner and Philip K. Dick’s Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Judith B. Kerman, ed., 154–77 (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991), 68 as found in Locke, “White and ‘Black’ versus Yellow,” 134.

³⁰ I will refer to these women as Boomer and Athena, to avoid confusion. See Appendix A.

surrounded by naked versions of other Number Eights (Figure 10). Jennifer Stoy noted the unfortunate sexualization of Asian women when Boomer confirms her Cylon identity:

The Eight's model interest in nudity becomes a childish joke: she, the beautiful small Asian woman, is the only Cylon to run about nude. This destroys the idea that Ronald D. Moore floated about this, that Cylons do not care about modesty. Instead, it appears that only beautiful Cylon women who fit stereotypes about Asian women do not care about modesty.³¹

This observation is powerful: although Number Six, the blonde bombshell, is supposedly the fantasy sex object among the Cylons, it is Number Eight that the show actually undresses and objectifies.³² As explored in Chapter 1, Number Six is always in control of her sexuality and uses it as a weapon from the first scene of the miniseries. The nude Eights, however, imply a lack of control and Stoy's allusion to a childlike innocence. Furthermore, we may link this directly to the stereotype of Asian women as "little dolls."³³ These Eights, who will immediately die in the nuclear detonation arranged by Boomer, are nothing more as symbols of the Cylons. Their nudity, and by extension their lack of modesty, is disposable.

³¹ Jennifer Stoy, "Of Great Zeitgeist and Bad Faith: An Introduction to *Battlestar Galactica*," in *Battlestar Galactica: Investigating Flesh, Spirit and Steel*, Roz Kaveney and Jennifer Stoy, eds., 1–36 (New York; London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010), 15.

³² As explored in Chapter 1, Six is perhaps the most sexualized character in *BSG*, but it is striking that she, a white woman, is never nude while Eight, an Asian woman, is.

³³ Erica Kanesaka Kalnay, "Yellow Peril, Oriental Plaything: Asian Exclusion and the 1927 U.S.-Japan Doll Exchange," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 23, no. 1 (2020): 93–124.

Figure 10: Nude Number Eights³⁴



And yet, as Boomer departs from sexualized and helpless caricature, she becomes bold, powerful, and assertive. In a problematic twist, however, Boomer's transition to femme fatale ultimately leads to a tragic conclusion. Boomer dies twice on screen: murdered during Season 2 by Cally after the discovery of Boomer's Cylon nature, and again in the penultimate episode at the hand of her identical counterpart, Athena. Foster similarly meets a poetic but violent end as Chief Galen Tyrol strangles her in Galactica's CIC. Stoy astutely tied the women's deaths, especially Foster's brutal murder, to their ethnicity:

The death of Tory Foster is charged, not simply because of the character's gender, but because of her race and the way that her narrative fits the 'tragic mulatta'... The fact that she was twice as ruthless as her white male predecessor and narratively set up to take the fall for some of Roslin's more heinous decisions... raises alarms for me. Why is the woman of colour among the Final Five Cylons the xenophobe who believes in Cylon superiority?³⁵

³⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2."

³⁵ Stoy, "Of Great Zeitgeist and Bad Faith," 15.

Foster's death is critically concerning: Tyrol kills her because Foster murdered Cally, who in turn murdered Boomer. Despite this, Galactica officials excused Cally's actions with a brief punishment (only thirty days in the brig) while Foster died for hers. Furthermore, the camera focuses on Tyrol's angry face rather register the last moments of the victim, Foster.

Figure 11: Tyrol killing Foster³⁶



Perhaps even more distressing than *BSG*'s treatment of its BIPOC Cylon women is that of Simon O'Neill, the black Number Four Cylon. Deis's review of race in *BSG* lingered on the black male, noting that only three black male characters played prominent roles within the series, including a criminal overlord, a Cylon, and a traitor. This critique focuses specifically on the Cylon Simon, who first appears in Season 2's "The Farm" (2.05) and medically experiments on human women. Deis compellingly lays out the problematic racial undertones in the episode:

Starbuck, the white, blonde heroine is paired with Simon in a series of interactions where

³⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4.5, episode 21, "Daybreak, Part 3," directed by Michael Rymer, aired March 20, 2009, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 4.

she is tied down, semi-nude in a hospital gown, experimented upon, and violated by the tall, handsome, powerful, black, male Cylon. And adding to the racially provocative coding of this episode, it is during this encounter that Simon, heretofore unknown to the audience, emerges as the only black character among the Cylon models depicted so far.³⁷

Deis concluded that Starbuck is “symbolically raped” by the black man throughout “The Farm” – the most pernicious of all U.S. American racist tropes.³⁸ The treatment of black men in *BSG* accentuates the covert racism present in the series. Although science fiction lauds a future where all ethnicities, nations, and/or religions of humanity unites against the alien Other, contemporary prejudices of our modern world still exist in *BSG*.

Music and the Racial Other

Residual racism plays out in the score as well, in particular through McCreary’s assignment of leitmotifs. The absence of consistent, character-specific music for supporting characters Anastasia Dualla and Felix Gaeta, for example, portrays the lack of intentionality dedicated to the non-white characters of *BSG*. Although both Dualla and Gaeta appear in most episodes until their deaths, neither receives individual leitmotifs until tragedy strikes. Dualla, a CIC communications officer, appears first in the miniseries and continues until her suicide in “Sometimes a Great Notion” (4.11). The absence of a leitmotif for Dualla is shocking, since she is part of the series’ main love triangle along with Apollo and Starbuck. Furthermore, Dualla and Apollo marry between Seasons 2 and 3, but do not have a love leitmotif. Dualla’s primary music before her death in Season 4 is a generic love leitmotif (dubbed To Kiss or Not to Kiss by McCreary) depicting her relationship with Billy, Roslin’s assistant, in the first two seasons.³⁹

³⁷ Deis, “Erasing Difference,” 165.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ See Appendix A.

This leitmotif does not belong specifically to Dualla and Billy, however, as McCreary also uses it to depict romantic moments between Boomer and Tyrol as well as between Starbuck and Anders.

Dualla finally receives a leitmotif during her death episode, suggesting that this black character only truly matters as a plot device. In “Sometimes a Great Notion,” Dualla commits suicide after the Colonial Fleet achieves its long-held dream of finding Earth. The episode begins with joy, which soon dissipates as the characters discover Earth is a nuclear wasteland.⁴⁰ Upon discovering the original Earth, the fleet’s hopeful dream becomes crushing reality.⁴¹ Unfortunately, the writers’ choice to kill Dualla—a black woman—communicates to the audience that women and characters of color are disposable. This is further evidenced by the writers’ cavalier disposal of Elosha, Roslin’s spiritual mentor who abruptly dies after stepping on

⁴⁰ This is the original Earth rather than a planet they eventually find and name Earth, which is our prehistoric Earth

⁴¹ McCreary interviewed the episode’s co-writers, Bradley Thompson and David Weddle, on this distressing turn. Weddle compared reality to television, noting that shows often have happy endings, while Thompson offered a more hopeful outlook: “Weddle: ‘We wanted to realistically depict the despair that our characters would feel after discovering Earth was a burnt out cinder. We did not want to make everything okay by the end of the episode. Our characters had been chasing the dream of Earth for three and a half years. It became an allegory for the dreams each of us chase: of achieving success in our chosen career, of finding our soul mate, starting a family, buying our dream house, etc. When those dreams are shattered, as they are for all of us at one time or another, we must find a way to pick ourselves up and go on. But movies and TV shows frequently portray this in a false melodramatic way. Someone makes an uplifting speech, or gives someone a hug and the despair melts away. In life it is much, much harder to rebound from a crushing blow. And many people never manage to rebound at all.’ Thompson: “*Galactica* was heading into the final act of its four year story and Ron felt we should have the wind totally knocked out of us. We also felt that the colonists had been relying too much on prophecy — it should fail and the gods shouldn’t hand us paradise on a platter. The Colonists and the Cylons needed a serious boot up the arse to start rethinking what they believed about themselves and each other in order to create their own future, together or separate. We also felt that the truth about Earth would be too much for some people to take.” McCreary, “BG4: ‘Sometimes a Great Notion’,” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, January 17, 2009, accessed April 24, 2020, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-sometimes-a-great-notion/>.

a landmine. Neither Elosha's nor Dualla's deaths serve a great purpose; instead, these black women suffer senseless deaths that serve to shock audiences rather than advance the narrative. This continues a disturbing arc in *BSG*, in which all female characters who appear in the show's credits die at least once. Stoy offered a damning critique of these deaths, noting the gender bias implicit within the script:

While *every* male character in the credit sequence survived, as well as the overwhelming majority of high-profile male characters such as Tyrol and Tigh, not a *single* credited female character made it to the end of *BSG* without dying once – and most of them didn't have the Cylon trick of resurrection to fall back on. Caprica Six and Athena may survive and thrive on prehistoric Earth, but their deaths are unpleasant and their resurrections and thriving are tied to their relationships with human men such as Baltar and Helo.⁴²

The immense number of female deaths in *BSG* resembles the “undoing” of women in opera, but the triviality of their deaths is even more depressing.⁴³ Roslin and Starbuck die for a greater purpose, but Foster, Dualla, and Elosha are simply discarded as refuse—put out of the narrative airlock, so to speak.

Dualla's death serves merely as a shock factor, and her music tracks her suicidal path. The Dualla leitmotif first appears as the character departs Earth. Although the character does not speak, her eyes are haunted. The leitmotif, a simple, pastoral B-major tune reminiscent of a lullaby, returns repeatedly as Dualla's demise approaches (see Figure 12). Evoking African American spirituals, Dualla's leitmotif is built from a short, repetitive melodic phrase.⁴⁴ Tellingly, this haunting leitmotif resulted from a momentary improvisation by actress Kandyse McClure, without which Dualla might never have received music. McClure remembered

⁴² Stoy, “Of Great Zeitgeist and Bad Faith,” 12.

⁴³ Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, Betsy Wing, trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

⁴⁴ Dena J. Epstein, *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War*, Music in American Life (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), 217.

Michael Angeli revealed, came from the discovery that actor Alessandro Juliani studied opera in college:

After we hammered out the bare bones story arc, Ron [Moore] came to me with this idea of having Gaeta sing “an opera” whenever his leg’s bothering him. And he wanted an original song...He wanted it to be sad, about a lost lover. In a sense, we were creating a back-story through the song. And “opera” was probably the wrong word. He wanted more of a ballad, with a minor key feel to it. So I wrote the lyrics with the lost lover in mind...I also felt that the “story” in the song should be an allegory for the cold reality of Gaeta losing his leg and there’s nothing that can be done about it.⁴⁸

Gaeta’s Lament has a verse-chorus structure that includes three repetitions of the verse.

McCreary conceived of the work in B minor but noted in his blog that Juliani heard the piece in E minor and resolved it from dominant to tonic at the end of the piece – a progression rarely heard on *BSG* (see Figure 13).⁴⁹ The lament is powerful and dramatic; the dotted rhythms create a lullaby-like sway that eases Gaeta as he nears amputation, and the tune seems reminiscent of the era before the fall of the Twelve Colonies.

Figure 13: Gaeta’s Lament⁵⁰

The musical score for "Gaeta's Lament" is presented in three systems. The first system contains the first line of lyrics: "A - lone she sleeps in the shirt of man with my three wishes clutched first that she be spared the pain that comes from a dark and she finds love may it alwaysstay true this I wish for the second wish". The second system contains the second line: "in her_ hand The But wish no more, my life, you cantake To lau-ghing rain When I made too". The third system contains the third line: "have her, please, just oneday wake To have her, please, just one day wake". Chords are indicated above the notes: B, C, B, C, Em, G, B, C, B C, B C, Em, Em/F# G, Em, Em/F# G, B, C, Em, G, B, C, B7, Em.

⁴⁸ McCreary, “BG4: ‘Guess What’s Coming to Dinner’.”

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid. Used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

Gaeta dies like other characters of color before him, in his case, a mere seven episodes after losing his leg. The loss profoundly affected Gaeta and, after spiraling into depression and mutiny he is executed in “Blood on the Scales” (4.14). Gaeta’s Lament returns in the mutiny episodes, beginning with “The Oath” (4.13) as Gaeta helps terrorist Tom Zarek escape capture. McCreary noted his intentions in bringing back the lament:

Throughout the episode, it was my hope that the combination of Gaeta’s Lament with the tense Japanese percussion and soloists would effectively communicate his inherent sadness, menace and warped idealism... These small Japanese-inspired cues reach their first peak when Gaeta successfully overtakes the CIC. As he steps forward and takes command, Chris Bleth’s bansuri states the verse of “Gaeta’s Lament.” At this moment, the melody is clear and strong, adding menace and power to his coup. However, at the end of the scene, when Adama says “You’ll die with nothing,” the Zhong hu, duduk, and yialli tanbur state the chorus of “Gaeta’s Lament.” This time the arrangement is much darker, underlining the fact that, as of this moment, neither one of these men will rest until the other is dead.⁵¹

Gaeta’s narrative arc concludes one episode later, which McCreary fills with echoes of his lament. Turning from the previous episode’s powerful orchestration, McCreary uses bansuri, gamelan, harp, and piano to show Gaeta’s tragic fall and ultimate death.⁵² A solo, melancholy erhu plays the final repetition of Gaeta’s Lament as the officer reflects on his youthful aspirations. In the final moments of Gaeta’s life, McCreary solicits the audience to feel empathy and sadness for the loss of this tragic character.

Death and silence engulf people of color in *BSG*, especially President Roslin’s aide Tory Foster. A member of the Final Five, Foster never receives her own leitmotif. *BSG* introduced Foster in Season 2, following the death of Roslin’s previous aide. Foster is a recurring character, although she is promoted to a supporting role in Season 4 after the stunning revelation that she

⁵¹ Bear McCreary, “BG4: ‘The Oath,’” January 30, 2009, accessed June 17, 2020, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-the-oath/>.

⁵² See glossary for a description of the bansuri.

belongs to the Final Five Cylons. Foster's initial role on the series is to support Roslin, but the writers began to develop her more as she struggled with her Cylon identity. While leitmotifs are essential for developing the main characters' interiority in the series, Foster's struggle with her identity remains mostly silent. Although she shares the Final Five leitmotif with the other Cylons, Foster does not receive any additional music. This is particularly noteworthy as Foster has two major scenes in Season 4 that speak to her internal motives: the murder of Cally and her own murder. During Cally's death scene in "The Ties That Bind" (4.03), McCreary uses Cally's lament leitmotif, which showcases her spiral into madness throughout the episode. Aside from a brief utterance of the Final Five leitmotif when Foster first appears, the music is entirely about Cally. And yet, when it is Foster's turn to die, she still has no leitmotif. Instead, Cally's leitmotif returns. Even in Foster's last, desperate moments, the music underlines the importance of Cally's death, not Foster's murder.

Indeed, the covert racism of *BSG* explains one of the most puzzling features of the score, to wit, the absence of a leitmotif for the central protagonist, Adama. If any character deserves a strong, individuated musical profile, it is surely this leader of the 'Western' colonial forces. Yet unlike the other main characters—including Roslin, Starbuck, Apollo, Baltar, Head and Caprica Six, and the Boomer and Athena Eights—Adama does not have his own leitmotif. Instead of his own defining music, Adama's presence is always accompanied by leitmotifs depicting his relationships with other white characters. Laura Roslin has her own leitmotif, as shown in Chapter 1, but she also has the Roslin and Adama music that accompanies their blossoming love story. Similarly, Lee "Apollo" Adama has an individual leitmotif but shares one, which we will entitle *The Adamas*, with his father for poignant moments between the two. When not with Apollo or Roslin, McCreary often sets Adama with the generic Military leitmotif: "This

melody...quickly developed into a theme for all military aspects of the colonial fleet, becoming especially associated with the friendship between Bill Adama and Saul Tigh.”⁵³ The fact that Adama, the patriarch of *BSG*, does not have his own music— instead depicted through the Roslin and Adama, The Adamas, and Military leitmotifs—is puzzling. While McCreary did not intend to set Adama apart, his lack of music for the Commander ultimately reinforces the perception that Adama stands apart from the other main characters, despite the writers’ attempt to erase ethnic differences.

Othering through Timbre and Instrumentation

Although the music of *BSG* failed to unite humanity and erase racial differences, it ultimately succeeded in Othering the Cylons. McCreary’s use of timbre, in particular, helped to create this dichotomy. As we have seen, the music of *BSG* pulls from a wide array of non-Western instruments, creating a soundscape outside that of the stereotypically bold and brassy space opera score. It is not primarily the use of Asian and Middle Eastern instrumentation, then, that differentiates the humans from the Cylons, but rather the ways McCreary exploits the timbre of the instruments and writes lyrical melodies using the timbres produced. McCreary does occasionally use Euro-Western instrumentation, however, to enhance relationships and portray the might of the Colonial Fleet. As a result, most individual human leitmotifs use ‘Eastern’ instrumentation and timbres, while many collective human leitmotifs use traditionally ‘Western’ instrumentation. This rich variety of human leitmotifs is in pointed contrast with the Cylons, who possess only a small number.

⁵³ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt V.”

The music of the Cylons rarely diverges from a percussive timbre. The Temple of Five leitmotif, for example, uses bells, chimes, temple bowls, glass marimba, and tines.⁵⁴ The generic Cylons leitmotif similarly relies on a mixture of pitched and unpitched percussion. The leitmotif features only three notes and is always played on pots, pans, and toasters – a clear reference to the Cylons’ derogatory “Toaster” nickname.⁵⁵ These metallic timbres combine with other percussion instruments, such as the Japanese taiko drums, for each iteration of the leitmotif. McCreary transformed the leitmotif even further in Season 3: “This evolution culminated in ‘Scar,’ when the producers wanted to create a *Jaws*-like musical character for the lethal raider of the episode’s title. This rhythm was the obvious choice. To help Scar’s [leitmotif] stand out, I added a Brazilian berimbau to the pattern...giving it a nastier, edgier sound.”⁵⁶ McCreary continued to use the berimbau in the Cylons leitmotif after “Scar” (2.15), creating a terrifying, percussive timbre for the machines.⁵⁷

Unlike the large number of leitmotifs that portray humanity, the Cylons leitmotif alone represents the majority of the machines. There are multiple types of Cylon warriors, including the robotic Centurions, flying Raiders, and humanoid models. The Centurions are the oldest of the Cylons, created by humans to assist with their daily tasks and similar to the robotics found on our modern Earth. The Raiders, in contrast, are circular planes that engage in battle with *Galactica*’s Viper pilots. The humans pilot the Vipers, but the Raiders think for themselves and do not need a pilot. McCreary uses the Cylons leitmotif for both the Centurions and Raiders, as these faceless machines do not warrant multiple leitmotifs. Surprisingly, however, McCreary

⁵⁴ See glossary for descriptions of these instruments.

⁵⁵ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt. II.”

⁵⁶ See glossary for a description of the berimbau. *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 2.5, episode 15, “Scar,” directed by Michael Nankin, aired February 3, 2006, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Home Studios Entertainment, 2006), disc 2.

uses the Cylons leitmotif for most of the humanoid models as well. Only Models Six and Eight have their own leitmotifs – the remaining five share the pervasive Cylons.

Both the Six and Eight leitmotifs continue to use percussive instrumentations and timbres through the incorporation of gamelan. First composed by Richard Gibbs for the *BSG* miniseries, the Six leitmotif appears in almost every episode of the series and is a one-pitch, nine-note motive that is performed by Balinese gamelan (Figure 14). McCreary composed the Eight leitmotif in the manner of Gibb’s Six, using Balinese gamelan to foreshadow Boomer’s identity as a Cylon sleeper agent. Gamelan ensembles, which have a long and culturally rich history in Indonesia, are comprised primarily of percussion instruments like metallophones and idiophones. Moreover, gamelan ensembles can play melodies as well as rhythms, differentiating them from the pots, pans, toasters, and taiko drums used for the other Cylon leitmotifs. Although Balinese gamelan advances the melodic abilities of the instrumentation, its timbre remains relatively percussive and metallic in the Six leitmotif. The Eight leitmotif, however, features a softer timbre than Six and Cylons, an intriguing change that this chapter will discuss in greater detail later.

Figure 14: Six leitmotif⁵⁸



Despite gamelan’s musical complexity, the ensemble is coded as exotic. Sumarsam intricately outlined the vast history of Javanese gamelan in World Fairs and Exhibitions, noting

⁵⁸ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt I,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

the “exotic Otherness” of the Indonesian ensemble to Western audiences.⁵⁹ Analyzing gamelan’s exotic coding on modern audiences, David Harnish described the problematic reception of teaching Balinese gamelan at Bowling Green State University. Even today, Harnish noted, students receive gamelan as “the exotic, romantic, yet insignificant Other.”⁶⁰ It is understandable to surmise, then, that many of Sci-Fi’s musically uneducated viewers had the same preconceptions. Gamelan, in the many audience’s ears, is likely to be heard as primitive.

Unlike the music of the Cylons, the leitmotifs of humanity are instrumentally diverse with vast differences in timbre. The individual leitmotifs, in particular, often features instrumentation and timbres that musically depict the personality and struggles of the character. The vicarious Kara “Starbuck” Thrace, for example, receives what McCreary names “the most triumphant” melody, which is almost always played by the duduk, strings, or sung.⁶¹ Similarly, the Tigh leitmotif, which first appeared in “Fragged” (2.03), showcases Tigh’s stiff, military personality through its declamatory melody and brass instrumentation. Meanwhile, Karl “Helo” Agathon’s leitmotif uses full and dark timbres to show the character’s anxiety and inner conflict as he struggled to survive on the Cylon-infested Caprica. The leitmotif for Lee “Apollo” Adama, however, uses sparse instrumentation to show the pilot’s internal conflict. Although each of these leitmotifs feature unique timbres and instrumentations, all four portray an essential part of these characters: their masculinity.

⁵⁹ Although Sumarsam discussed Javanese gamelan here, not Balinese, many of their conclusions remain impactful. Sumarsam, *Javanese Gamelan and the West* (Rochester, NY; Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 77–114.

⁶⁰ David Harnish, “No, Not ‘Bali Hai!’: Challenges of Adaptation and Orientalism in Performing and Teaching Balinese Gamelan” in *Performing Ethnomusicology*, Ted Solis, ed., 104–113 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 105.

⁶¹ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt. I.”

McCreary combines dissonance with a full sound in the Helo leitmotif to portray the character's anxiety and heroic nature. In the miniseries, Helo sacrifices his life for the betterment of society, offering to stay on the nuclear wasteland of Caprica and giving up his seat on the Raptor that could have saved him to Baltar, a man who Helo believed could help humanity with his genius.⁶² Following this heroic moment, Helo fights for his life throughout Seasons 1 and 2, dodging Centurions and attempting to find a way back to Galactica. McCreary composed the Helo leitmotif with the officer's season-long arc in mind. In the Helo leitmotif, which consists of falling minor third-inversion triads culminating in a final major chord, McCreary uses dissonance along with the combination of strings, synthesizer, and a choir to portray Helo's anxiety as the Centurions hunt him.

Figure 15: Helo leitmotif⁶³



Furthermore, the instrumentation of the Helo leitmotif showcases the character's masculinity. The leitmotif is often accompanied by taiko drums, emphasizing the character's power and strength. Paul Yoon noted that taiko drums, particularly the Odaiko solo, have long been associated with violence, aggression, and power in filmic representations:

"Power" in taiko performance arrives not solely in the volume of a single stroke on a huge drum. Power is also in the way the drummer stands before his instrument, listening to the echo and decay of the sound. Power is the way volume is coupled with the coordination, grace, and speed of dozens of drummers in rhythm and synchronous movement. In short, imagery and sound are inextricably bound in taiko.⁶⁴

⁶² See Appendix B for a full summary of the miniseries.

⁶³ McCreary, "Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt. II," used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁶⁴ Paul J. Yoon, "Asian Masculinities and Parodic Possibility in Odaiko Solos and Filmic Representations." *Asian Music* 40, no. 1 (2009): 103.

Although the taiko drums do not dominate the Helo leitmotif, their presence subtly reinforces the character's masculinity. We may observe this further through the all-male chorus. Guttural, male droning leads into the leitmotif before the men break into three-part harmony.

The instrumentation and timbre of the Apollo leitmotif similarly enhances Lee Adama's role as the romantic hero and his evolving masculinity. The Apollo leitmotif is the simplest of the human leitmotifs. Consisting of only four notes, it first appears in the show's opening episode "33" as Apollo faces a critical decision. McCreary described the leitmotif and his decision to use it sparingly in his online commentary:

Featured at the climax of the story, it was set against Apollo's reluctant decision to pull the trigger and destroy a ship he suspected contained innocent civilians... Lee's [leitmotif] is inherently melancholy, and less malleable than Starbuck's theme, which can be adapted freely to fit many moods. As a result, I put Lee's [leitmotif] away, saving it for the right moment.⁶⁵

McCreary rarely used Apollo's leitmotif, except in moments when the Viper pilot struggled with difficult decisions. This simple melody, lack of harmony, and general melancholy exemplifies what Charles Ford described as "sensitive masculine music."⁶⁶ Apollo often displays a sensitive side, as when he debates destroying the Olympic Carrier in the first episode.

Figure 16: Apollo leitmotif⁶⁷



⁶⁵ Bear McCreary, "Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt III," *Bear McCreary Official Site*, December 8, 2006, accessed December 11, 2017, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/themes-of-bg-pt-iii>.

⁶⁶ Charles Ford, *Music, Sexuality and the Enlightenment in Mozart's Figaro, Don Giovanni and Così Fan Tutte* (Burlington, VT: Routledge, 2012), 73.

⁶⁷ McCreary, "Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Part III," used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

The Season 1 episode “Hand of God” depicts both sides of Apollo’s personality—the military masculine and the sensitive masculine—in its climactic battle scene. In this episode, Apollo leads the Galactica pilots on a potentially suicidal mission to destroy a Cylon basestar. McCreary uses the Apollo leitmotif throughout as the character struggles to help his colleagues but soon valiantly wins the battle. The leitmotif’s simple, C-minor melody offers plenty of room for McCreary to transform it as needed. He uses instrumentation as the main means to contrast Apollo’s two natures: the sensitive masculine from a melancholy, alto flute (while his lover Starbuck anxiously looks on) versus the militaristic masculine featuring bombastic bagpipes and snare drums.⁶⁸ Ultimately, the heroic masculine wins out and bagpipes overwhelm the score, transitioning into The Adamas leitmotif as Apollo comes home to his father.

The Tigh leitmotif is also straightforward. As Tigh claims martial law in “Fragged” (2.03), McCreary sets Tigh’s brief moment of indecision and introspection with a duduk playing the Phrygian melody (see Figure 17).⁶⁹ As the Executive Officer recommits to martial law, however, McCreary turns to the military topic. Powerful drums take over at first, beating out an intense cadence. Then, in one of their few appearances in *BSG*, the brass enter. McCreary uses low brass, drums, and a march—the three main elements of the military topic—to portray Tigh’s ferocity and power. After Adama’s return to command, McCreary continued to utilize the Tigh leitmotif throughout Season 3 when Tigh served as a leader in the Cylon resistance, but the leitmotif reaches an abrupt end as Tigh’s identity irrevocably changes in the Season 3 finale.

⁶⁸ Celtic instrumentation often accompanies the Adama leitmotifs, seen both in Apollo and The Adamas.

⁶⁹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Fragged.”

Figure 17: Tigh leitmotif⁷⁰



The Helo, Apollo, and Tigh leitmotifs all display the human characters' masculinity, but so does the leitmotif for Starbuck. Even though she not a man, Starbuck's music shows the character's gender-bending traits. As noted in the first chapter, the original Starbuck of the 1978 *BSG* was a heroic male, played by the rugged Richard Hatch. The casting of Katie Sackhoff, then, caused an uproar within the fanbase. And yet, much of Sackhoff's interpretation retained the character's masculinity. Throughout the miniseries, Starbuck shows her volatile, manly nature: sporting a short haircut, she smokes cigars, plays poker, and punches her supervising officer, all while spewing curses. Starbuck's masculine nature continues throughout the series, and even though she is in several love triangles (Apollo/Dualla and Apollo/Anders) and the object of Leoben's obsession, Starbuck eludes romantic entanglements and grows increasingly reckless.⁷¹

The Starbuck leitmotif and its many transformations throughout the series effectively depicts the character's embodiment of both masculinity and femininity. First presented in "You Can't Go Home Again" (1.05), this leitmotif is initially triumphant and courageous, corresponding with Starbuck's heroic return to Galactica.⁷² As she finds the strength to return, the music is exuberant, the duduk outlining a C-major chord while accompanied by fast,

⁷⁰ McCreary, "Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Part III," used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁷¹ See Appendix A.

⁷² *Battlestar Galactica*, season 1, episode 5, "You Can't Go Home Again," directed by Sergio Mimica-Gezzan, aired February 4, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment), disc 3.

exuberant percussion (see Figure 18). At the end of the episode, however, the leitmotif turns pensive and emotional as Starbuck and her father-figure, Commander Adama, reunite. Instead of fast percussion, the duduk—now playing a slower, lyrical, and ornamented version of the leitmotif—is accompanied by a drone. These changes in the accompaniment’s instrumentation display Starbuck’s oscillation between masculine and feminine: the percussion shows her strength and power while the drone shows her pensive, emotional side. The warm and soft timbre of the duduk, however, remains throughout all variations. Starbuck’s outward nature may change, but she remains the same person within.

Figure 18: Starbuck leitmotif⁷³



Although most of the leitmotifs in *BSG* use Asian and Middle Eastern instrumentation, McCreary occasionally uses Euro-Western orchestral instruments to emphasize the importance of a leitmotif. The *Galactica* leitmotif, for example, uses an abundance of brass. Originally composed by Stu Phillips for the 1978 *BSG*, the *Galactica* leitmotif rarely appears in the reinvented series. Instead, McCreary saves the dramatic fanfare for prominent moments, such as the ship’s final send-off in “Daybreak, Part 3.”⁷⁴ He described his collaboration with Phillips as uniting the 1978 space opera score with the updated *BSG* soundscape by combining the “traditional orchestra with the taikos and duduks of the new score to create a version that bridges

⁷³ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Part I,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁷⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 3.”

3, but soon thereafter Starbuck cheats on Anders with Apollo. Starbuck dramatically dies before they can reconcile, and Anders soon discovers he is a Cylon. Their story does not end here, however, as Starbuck returns, and the pair reunite before their demise in the series finale.

Figure 20: Starbuck and Anders leitmotif⁷⁹



McCreary continues to use Western instrumentation in Starbuck’s love leitmotifs, expanding to a string orchestra in the Starbuck and Apollo leitmotif. Although Starbuck married Anders, her true love story throughout *BSG* is with Apollo. Their story has a tragic beginning: Starbuck was once engaged to Apollo’s brother, Zak, who died an untimely death. Starbuck and Lee bicker and fight like siblings, but their love develops from familial to romantic over the course of the series. Yet the ending of their love story is just as tragic: both marry other people and have affairs, and the series ends with Starbuck dead and Apollo alone.⁸⁰ McCreary crafts their love leitmotif with a Mixolydian scale built on C that also incorporates a flat 6. Furthermore, the Starbuck and Apollo leitmotif is played by violins and a viola/cello ostinato (see Figure 21). Including the duduk, bansuri, and the Irish whistle as well, McCreary notes that the “rolling 6/8 backdrop and lush voicings make this melody one of the most unabashedly lyrical in the entire series.”⁸¹ Separately, the Starbuck leitmotif and the Apollo leitmotif are not

⁷⁹ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt III,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁸⁰ See Appendix B.

⁸¹ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt IV.”

having false memories planted in her, getting switched ‘on’ as a Cylon, shooting Adama, getting shot by Cally, and her experiences on New Caprica have left her severely disturbed.”⁸⁴ Boomer’s spiral continued throughout the first three seasons and, as Boomer became more mentally unstable and Athena grew closer to the humans, the Eight leitmotif slowly appeared less often on *BSG*’s soundtrack.

This changed, however, in Season 4 as the series’ finale approached. As both Boomer and Athena play key roles throughout the season, McCreary subtly brings the Eight leitmotif back to musical prominence. Its meaning, McCreary noted, becomes even more complicated in “Islanded in a Stream of Stars” (4.18): “This [leitmotif] was originally composed in ‘33’ to be the Boomer [Leitmotif]. It was later expanded to be the Athena [Leitmotif]. At the end of “Islanded,” it also underscores Hera crying out for Boomer, a moment that marks the [leitmotif]’s transformation again into the de facto Hera [Leitmotif].”⁸⁵ This episode leads directly into the three-part finale, “Daybreak,” in which Boomer returns a kidnapped Hera to Athena and Helo. As all three subjects of the leitmotif unite, the gamelan ensemble once more plays the Eight leitmotif. And yet, the instrumentation transforms as Boomer shocks everyone and turns against Cylon wishes to the advantage of humanity. Boomer hands Hera over to Athena – when this impactful moment occurs, a string orchestra joins the gamelan ensemble in playing Eight. Here, at the moment when Boomer acknowledges her past memories of humanity

⁸⁴ Alan Sepinwall, “*Battlestar Galactica*: Weddle and Thompson Talk ‘Someone to Watch Over Me’,” *The Star Ledger*, last modified April 2, 2019, accessed October 27, 2020, https://www.nj.com/entertainment/tv/2009/02/battlestar_galactica_weddle_th.html.

⁸⁵ Bear McCreary, “BG4: ‘Islanded in a Stream of Stars’,” March 7, 2009, accessed June 29, 2020, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-islanded-in-a-stream-of-stars/>.

(saying, “Tell the old man [Adama] I owed him one”), the instrumentation combines Eastern (gamelan) with Western (orchestra).⁸⁶

Othering through Melody, Rhythm, and Form

Similar to the lack of timbral and instrumental variations amongst the Cylons, the absence of traditional melodies and forms in the leitmotifs of the machines alert the *BSG* audience to an implied Otherness. Compared to the leitmotifs of humanity, the Cylon music is minimalistic. As previously explored, the dark, expressive, and occasionally orchestral timbres of the Colonial Fleet stand in stark contrast to the detached and often percussive timbres of the Cylons. The disparities between melody, form, and rhythm amongst the leitmotifs of two warring factions equally illustrates this dichotomy. Although he rarely used Western instrumentation, McCreary often relied upon traditional Western musical forms and lyrical melodies to represent the humans. In contrast, most Cylon leitmotifs are rhythmic rather than melodic, and do not adhere to standard Western formal structures. The differences lie not only in individual leitmotifs, such as those of Roslin and Head Six, but relationship leitmotifs (Roslin and Adama, Head Six and Baltar) as well.

As noted when discussing timbre, most of the Cylons do not have their own leitmotifs. Instead, Numbers One, Two, Three, Four, and Five all share the Cylons leitmotif. The lack of individual leitmotifs for the Cylons contrasts sharply with the nuanced musical representation of the human characters. Numbers One and Three, in particular, should have their own music. Number One, the dastardly priest-impersonator John Cavil, is the villain during the latter seasons

⁸⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4.5, episode 20, “Daybreak, Part 2,” directed by Michael Rymer, aired March 20, 2009, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 4.

of *BSG*.⁸⁷ The writers depict Cavil as the leader of the Cylons and it is only after his death that humanity can survive. Number Three, D’Anna, similarly deserves her own music. As noted in Chapter 1, D’Anna spearheads most of the Cylon narrative throughout Season 3, kidnapping Baltar and going on a dramatic pursuit of the Final Five that culminates in her death and “boxing.”⁸⁸ Both Numbers One and Three push the Cylon narrative forward; despite this, McCreary consistently uses Cylons instead of individual leitmotifs.

In the Cylons leitmotif, McCreary prioritizes rhythm and meter over melody. This generalized leitmotif, which occurs throughout all four seasons of *BSG*, only uses three notes: C, G, and A (see Figure 22). Due to the leitmotif’s typically unpitched instrumentation, these pitches are rarely sounded out. Instead, metallic sounds such as pots, pans, and toasters bang out the rhythm while the three-note melody only occurs when McCreary adds gamelan or the berimbau to the ensemble. McCreary also uses accents and ends Cylons with ghost notes, exclaiming that rhythm, not melody, dominates Cylon music.

Figure 22: Cylons leitmotif⁸⁹



Furthermore, McCreary’s use of irregular meter immediately Others the Cylons leitmotif.

The use of irregular meter on its own can mean many things, but combined with the unusual

⁸⁷ See Appendix A.

⁸⁸ Cylon models are boxed—that is, put in storage—when found defective. Cavil boxed all D’Anna models after she discovered the faces of the Final Five and she was later unboxed in Season 4 following the Cylon Civil War. See Appendix B.

⁸⁹ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt II,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

instrumentation, the leitmotif fits what Ralph Locke calls the “‘Exotic Style Only’ Paradigm.”⁹⁰ This paradigm, Locke argued, works with musical elements that carry a variety of meaning depending on their context. Reading such elements as irregular meter as Other, then, depends on the intent of exoticism if the music “makes use of stylistic materials that (1) depart from currently prevailing norms *and* (2)...can be understood as indicating [an exotic] locale some other way (e.g., through an invented style or through touches of intentional strangeness.”⁹¹ Applying this paradigm to the Cylons leitmotif, we must note that irregular meter departs from the regular meters established in human leitmotifs, such as Starbuck, Baltar, and The Adamas. This departure, combined with the unusual metallic instrumentation signifying the Cylon Toasters, intentionally labels the Cylons as exotic.

The “Exotic Style Only Paradigm” similarly relates to the leitmotif of Number Six. Although Gibbs, not McCreary, composed the Six leitmotif, many of the stylistic musical elements remain the same. At first glance, the meter of Six seems regular, set in 9/8 time. Combined with the accents, however, the Six leitmotif uses an unusual rhythmic grouping of 3-2-2-2 instead of the typical triple meter grouping of 3-3-3 (see Figure 23). By placing the irregular rhythmic groupings with the gamelan instrumentation, Gibbs in affect Others the character. Perhaps even more tellingly, the Six leitmotif only features one pitch, illustrating the importance of rhythm over harmony and melody for this Cylon.

⁹⁰ Ralph P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 18.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

Figure 23: Six leitmotif⁹²



The exotic Otherness of the Six leitmotif is the only music for the character, even though the Cylon is in one of the series' primary romantic couplings. Throughout the show, the narrative arcs of Head Six and Caprica Six mainly revolve around their relationship with Baltar. As explored in Chapter 1, Head Six regularly seduces Baltar on Galactica and Caprica Six reunites with him in the final episodes of the series. And yet, they do not have a love leitmotif. Unlike Tyrol and Cally, Starbuck and Anders, Starbuck and Apollo, and Roslin and Adama, the only leitmotif associated with the Number Six is the Six leitmotif. This is especially telling, as both Baltar and Number Six are main characters, unlike Cally and Anders. The couple is prominent throughout the entire show and easily has the most scenes of a romantic nature out of any *BSG* relationship. Regardless of this, Six's music remains emotionless and percussive.

The other Cylon to possess her own leitmotif, Number Eight, wavers between human and Cylon. Number Eight's leitmotif is perhaps the most melodic of the original Cylon music, showing Boomer's struggle through Season 1 as she comes to terms with her Cylon identity and Athena's dramatic decision between duty to the Cylons and love for Helo.⁹³ Unlike the Cylons and Six leitmotifs, the Eight leitmotif relies on melody, not rhythm (see Figure 24). A gamelan ensemble almost always plays Eight, which uses six notes and is relatively conjunct. McCreary also uses a variety of rhythms (quarter note, half note, dotted half note) instead of just one,

⁹² McCreary, "Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt I," used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁹³ See Appendices A and B.

signifying that the Number Eight model's personality is significantly more complex than the other humanoid models.

Figure 24: Eight leitmotif⁹⁴



Adding to the complexity of this music, McCreary seemed to change his mind as to what and who this leitmotif represented. When describing it in 2006, McCreary calls this the “Boomer” leitmotif but applies it specifically to Athena: “I initially introduced this melody in the first episode (“33”) as a possible Helo-Sharon Love [leitmotif]. However, its haunting and introspective quality connected itself more to Sharon’s inner conflict than her feelings for Helo.”⁹⁵ The Sharon model that McCreary referenced here later becomes known as “Athena” (given this nickname in the beginning of Season 3), whose most prominent character arc is that of her relationships with Helo and Hera. The “inner conflict,” then, that McCreary referred to could be Athena’s initial seduction of Helo on Caprica (plotted by the Cylons) and her struggle between love and loyalty. With this in mind, the melodic Eight leitmotif makes sense, as the Cylon is defined through her human relationships. McCreary further emphasized this point in his “Useless Facts” area, where he wrote: “I also composed an 1 1/8 percussion theme for Boomer for the episode ‘Water’...The idea was that the Boomer on Caprica [Athena] and the Boomer on Galactica would have different themes.”⁹⁶ In this separation, the Athena leitmotif would be

⁹⁴ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt I,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

melodic—showing her relationship with Helo and her eventual acceptance by humans—while a Boomer leitmotif would be rhythmic and highlight her transition from Galactica pilot to Cylon.

The one exception from the rhythmically-static Cylon leitmotifs initially seems to be Battlestar Sonatica from “Torn” (3.06).⁹⁷ In this episode, Baltar finds himself on a Cylon basestar surrounded by eerie piano music. Although initially inspired by Beethoven’s “Moonlight” Sonata, McCreary also modelled the harmonic language of Battlestar Sonatica on the works of Debussy and Ravel (see Figure 25).⁹⁸ This is seemingly the only Cylon leitmotif to include harmony, but McCreary clarified in his blog that the music represents Baltar, not the Cylons:

All the scenes of the basestar were scored using solo piano, an instrument that has made extremely seldom appearances thus far. This entire concept began with Ron Moore, who initially want to play something unexpected and unusually calm against Baltar’s strange and urgent surroundings. While it sometimes seems that the piano is a [leitmotif] for the basestar itself, it is in fact a musical representation of Baltar’s fear. During basestar scenes where Baltar is not present, the piano is gone!⁹⁹

As a result of Battlestar Sonatica applying to Baltar, all Cylon music continues to lack harmonic and complex melodic content.

⁹⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 3, episode 6, “Torn,” directed by Jean de Segonzac, aired November 3, 2006, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Home Studios Entertainment, 2008), disc 2.

⁹⁸ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt V.”

⁹⁹ Bear McCreary, “BG4: ‘Torn’,” November 3, 2006, accessed June 29, 2020, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg3-torn/>.

Figure 25: Battlestar Sonatica¹⁰⁰



Indeed, many of the musical elements present in the Cylons leitmotif fit within the concept of primitivism – an irony as the Cylons are significantly more advanced than humanity. Yet their music is represented as archaic through compositional strategies that have been used in the West to represent what is perceived as primitive music. Bruno Nettl described the main attributes of primitivist music: “The stylistic differences that do prevail are quantitative rather than qualitative: most of the primitive music is monophonic, while Western cultivated music is mainly harmonic; the forms of primitive music are likely to be much shorter than most cultivated forms, and so on.”¹⁰¹ Nettl also noted that “rhythm is in some way the most basic musical principle” and surveyed a wide array of theories that rhythm appeared before any elements of music.¹⁰² All of these elements— monophony, simple forms, and an emphasis on rhythm—

¹⁰⁰ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt V,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

¹⁰¹ Bruno Nettl, *Music in Primitive Culture*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 141.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 62.

occur in Cylons. Lucy Weir connected primitivism directly to Said's Orientalist theories, tracing four different productions of Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps* (1913):

One particular key term of distinction between the Western and Orientalised worlds is "rationalism" – this extends into the realm of 'primitivism,' an assumption that Western, educated, or 'First World' philosophy is dominated by rational thought, whereas the Oriental world is inherently irrational, by implication backwards, primitive in nature as well as in attitude.¹⁰³

Although the Cylons are technologically superior to humans, they are still represented as an Other and, as a result, their music is represented as primitive.

Contrast these static Cylon leitmotifs to that of Laura Roslin, one of the main human characters. Chapter 1 explored Roslin's leitmotif in conjunction with Kobol and her spirituality, noting its use of boy soprano to portray an ethereal sound. When studying the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif further, we must also recognize its dependence on Western structures (see Figure 26). The leitmotif utilizes three-bar phrases for a larger structure of 6 + 6, which creates a period through the repeating opening in phrases 1 and 3 (ABAB). Furthermore, its melodic contour is thoroughly more elaborate than the Cylon music. Compare Roslin/Kobol to Eight, which is certainly the most melodic of the Cylon leitmotifs. Both make use of the Phrygian scale—although the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif uses an altered Phrygian scale with a major third—and ends on the tonic. The Eight leitmotif, however, does not have any articulation markings, features an ambiguous phrase structure, and is primarily comprised of stepwise melodic motion (see Figure 27). By contrast, Roslin/Kobol features legato markings showing the ebb and flow of each phrase. The contour rises and falls, combining steps and leaps for an expressive melody sung by the tender timbre of a boy soprano. Instead of being forceful like the majority of the Cylon

¹⁰³ Lucy Weir, "Primitive rituals, contemporary aftershocks: Evocations of the orientalist 'other' in four productions of le Sacre du printemps," *Avant* 4, no. 3 (2013): 117.

music, the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif is soft, lyrical, and smooth. The length, phrase structure, and emotional melody of this leitmotif underlines an important aspect of Laura Roslin: she is an essential character and she is unmistakably human.

Figure 26: Roslin/Kobol leitmotif¹⁰⁴



Figure 27: Eight leitmotif¹⁰⁵



Although many individuals have their own leitmotifs, it is the music of intrapersonal relationships that exemplify the melodic and structural propensity of human leitmotifs. At its core, *BSG* is a television series about relationships. The larger narrative arc might follow humanity’s path to Earth and the Cylon pursuit, but each episode focuses on how the human characters relate to and interact with each other. Starbuck’s relationships with Anders and Apollo, for example, accompany her pursuit of a greater purpose and lead to her ultimate destiny as one of the saviors of the human race. Without these intimate relationships, Starbuck would not receive the necessary character development needed to move from rebel pilot in Season 1 to angelic savior in Season 4. Similarly, the relationship between Roslin and Adama forms the

¹⁰⁴ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt II,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

¹⁰⁵ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt I,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

cornerstone of *BSG*, drawing the audience into their ever-evolving interactions from enemies, to reluctant colleagues, to friends, and finally to lovers. Perhaps most profound, however, is the slow reconciliation between Adama and his son Apollo. These relationships stand at the heart of *BSG*, and the leitmotifs that portray these human characters (Starbuck, Roslin, Adama, and Apollo) diverges from the stale, rhythmic, and “exotic” leitmotifs of the Cylons.

The least heard relational leitmotif in *BSG* is that of Tyrol and Cally. The leitmotif has fascinating origins, as McCreary originally composed it for Tyrol and Boomer. In *BSG*, Tyrol begins the miniseries in a secret relationship with Boomer, who at that time does not know that she is a Cylon (nor, for that matter, does he know that he is also a Cylon). As a result, McCreary is not portraying the Cylon Number Eight here or one of the Final Five as Tyrol later discovers he is, but the “human” Sharon Valerii and the “human” Tyrol. The leitmotif, however, was short-lived. McCreary lamented:

I wrote this as a love [leitmotif] for Tyrol and Sharon’s secret rendezvous in “Litmus.” Their scenes were the perfect place to plant the seeds for a beautiful, lush love [leitmotif] which could be developed as their relationship continued... I really liked this [leitmotif] but, because I don’t read the scripts in advance, I didn’t realize that this was virtually the end of their screen time for the rest of the season! Their few remaining scenes together had no need for music, especially a lyrical love [leitmotif] like this. So, it went away for a long time.¹⁰⁶

Boomer’s and Tyrol’s relationship was dramatically torn apart after the discovery of Boomer’s origins, however, and the Chief soon began to develop a new relationship with Cally. The producers asked McCreary if he had any love music for them, and, as a result, the Tyrol and Boomer leitmotif transformed into a leitmotif for Tyrol and Cally.

The music of Tyrol and Cally does not sound like a typical love song. Set in the beguiling Lydian mode, the leitmotif descends in sighs, perhaps hinting at the inevitable doom of

¹⁰⁶ McCreary, “Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt III.”

Boomer's humanity and the tragedy that ensues after Tyrol realizes that he is a Cylon (see Figure 28). McCreary further adds darkness to this music through the instrumentation, setting the leitmotif with an alto flute. Unfortunately, and perhaps also ironically, this love lament also fits Tyrol and Cally as a couple. Following Tyrol's discovery of his Final Five identity at the tail end of Season 3, his relationship with Cally quickly suffers. Her assumed suicide (or rather, murder) ends their story in tragedy, which is only amplified when Tyrol discovers he is not the biological father of their child.

Figure 28: Tyrol and Boomer/Cally leitmotif¹⁰⁷



Tyrol's relationships with Boomer and Cally sit in the background of *BSG*, but the evolving love between Adama and Roslin is perhaps the strongest romantic love story of the series. Initially, the two battle for control of the Colonial Fleet, pitting political forces against the military. They eventually become uneasy allies, then friends, and finally lovers. Their love story has a tragic ending, however, as Roslin dies in Adama's arms from a terminal illness she has been fighting throughout the series soon after reaching Earth. McCreary describes the Roslin and Adama leitmotif as "as close to a 'love theme' as you're going to get on *BSG*" and notes that Celtic ballads inspired the melody.¹⁰⁸ The leitmotif uses the Dorian scale, potentially to evoke their wistful and subtle love, and is a simple waltz (see Figure 29). Much like the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif, Roslin and Adama has a period structure, repeating the wistful first phrase before resolving to C.

¹⁰⁷ McCreary, "Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt. III," used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Figure 29: Roslin and Adama leitmotif¹⁰⁹



Perhaps even more than the love stories, the fraught father-son bond between Apollo and Bill Adama is central to *BSG*. The miniseries begins with their relationship in shambles, as Apollo blames his father for Zak’s (Bill Adama’s other son and Apollo’s brother’s) death. They slowly rebuild over the next few seasons, however, and the show ends with both men alive and reconciled.¹¹⁰ McCreary calls their leitmotif the “most traditional” and it is typically played by the Irish whistle or bagpipes.¹¹¹ Celtic and Irish instrumentation always seems to accompany the Adama men, as the Adama and Roslin leitmotif pulls from Celtic ballads and the Starbuck and Apollo leitmotif uses the Irish whistle. Furthermore, McCreary subtitled *The Adamas* as “Wander My Friends” and included a Gaelic text:

Siúlaigí a chairde, siúlaidh liom	Wander my friends, wander with me
Mar cheo an tsléibhe uaine ag	Like the mist on the green mountain,
	moving eternally
Imeacht go deo	Despite our weariness
D’ainneoin ár dtuirse leanfam an tslí	We’ll follow the road
Thar chnoic is thar ghleannta	Over hill and valleys
Go deireadh na scríbi	To the end of the journey
Seo libh a chairde is canaidh liom	Come on my friends and sing with me
Líonaigín oíche le greann is le sport	Fill the night with joy and sport
Seo sláinte na gearad atá imithe uainn	Here’s a toast to the friends who have gone

¹⁰⁹ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt. III,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

¹¹⁰ See Appendices A and B.

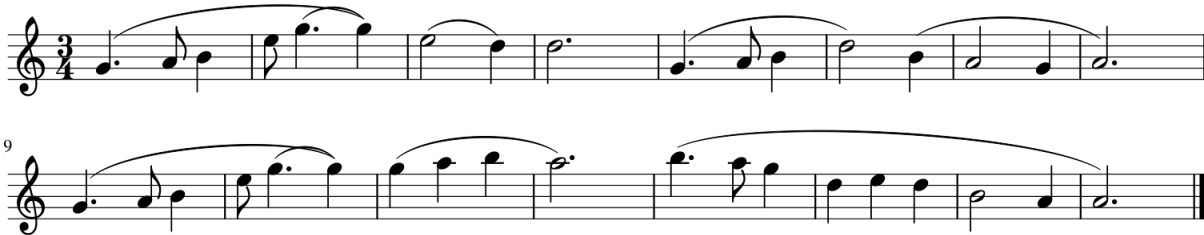
¹¹¹ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt. I.”

Mar cheo an tsléibhe uaine,
Iad imithe go deo

from us
Like the mist of the green mountain,
Gone forever¹¹²

This leitmotif is decidedly pastoral, derived from an Irish folk music tradition. McCreary uses a pentatonic scale and 3/4 meter for *The Adamas* as well as a simple, emotional melody often accompanied by a drone (see Figure 30). The music is a slower siciliano, set in 3/4 instead of 6/8, and features a period structure. Together, these elements combine into a heartfelt melody that expresses the deep bond between father and son.

Figure 30: The Adamas leitmotif¹¹³



“The Adamas” first occurred in Season 1’s “Hand of God” before Apollo sets off on a dangerous mission. He and his father share a poignant moment, reminiscing over a lighter that belonged to Apollo’s grandfather. Adama tells his son that the lighter is good luck and that it would keep Apollo safe on his mission as drones set up the leitmotif. Bagpipes then enters after Apollo finally learns that his father believes in him:

APOLLO: “Sometimes it feels like the whole ship thinks Starbuck would do better.”

ADAMA: “I don’t.”

APOLLO: “How can you be so sure?”

ADAMA: “Because you’re my son.”¹¹⁴

¹¹² Bear McCreary, Raya Yarbrough, Brendan McCreary, Melanie Henley Heyn, and Lillis Ó Laoire, *Battlestar Galactica: Original Soundtrack from the Sci Fi Channel Television Series, Season One* (Burbank, Calif: La-La Land Records, 2005).

¹¹³ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt. I,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

¹¹⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, “The Hand of God.”

The leitmotif then returns at the episode's end when Apollo triumphantly re-enters Galactica after defeating a Cylon basestar. The music swells and the Adamas share a sentimental moment when Apollo returns the lighter. Here, McCreary's Gaelic lyrics enter as the crew of Galactica euphorically embrace and, for one brief moment, the lyricism of the Adama men stands for all humanity, which is sonically represented as culturally white.

A Better Future?

Anthropocentrism is inescapable in *BSG*, but the series does not fully fulfill the goals of science fiction. As previously explored, Scholes and Rabkin argued that race becomes entirely unremarkable in the genre and Kilgore asserted that race is transformed.¹¹⁵ As we see in *BSG*, however, race still plays a role within science fiction series. Most of the BIPOC characters within the show ultimately die and are musically abandoned. Yet the Cylons and humans remain musically pitted against each other. We need look no further than the opening title credits for this musical dichotomy. Feminine, vocal wailing—which is intensely lyrical and accompanied by dark strings—fills the room as images of the Colonial Fleet flit across the screen under the text “Survivors in search of a home called Earth.” As the humans start to battle the Cylons, however, the music turns hostile with male grunting, loud percussion, and abrupt dynamics. McCreary features the two types of music in *BSG* within these 45 seconds: the lyrical, passionate music of humans versus the rhythmic, emotionless music of Cylons.

These contrasts speak to a larger movement in science fiction that pitted humanity, the “us,” against their otherworldly or mechanical opponents, the “them.” The genre hopes for a

¹¹⁵ Scholes and Rabkin, *Science Fiction*, 188.

utopian future, free of racism, sexism, and classism. And yet, as the narrative and soundtrack of *BSG* proved, this is still unattainable. Modernity seeps into science fiction television and racism, though often unintentional, inevitably occurs within the hopeful narratives. *BSG* has many flaws—its treatment of BIPOC and the lack of music surrounding their characters stands prominent—but it also continued the genre moving towards the dream of a better future.

Chapter 3: The Watchtower

Religious thought and theology pervade science fiction. James McGrath observed the similarities between the two, arguing that “both religion and science fiction tell stories that reflect on the place of human beings in the universe, good vs. evil, humanity’s future, and at times about the very nature of existence itself.”¹ McGrath argued, for example, that Darth Vader represented a fallen hero on the path to redemption. The religious correlations were further amplified during the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy, in which Anakin Skywalker results from an immaculate conception and is viewed as a savior.² The other major science fiction franchise, *Star Trek*, has a much more tumultuous relationship with religion. Series creator Gene Roddenberry did not want his show to fall into religious cliché, but many of the subsequent series and films delve into religious themes. Q from *The Next Generation*, for example, is presented as a supernatural power. Gregory Peterson argued that the presence of Q and other god-like beings adds commentary on morality and philosophy to the show.³ In the *Voyager* series, religion was humanized. As Darcee McLaren and Jennifer Porter insightfully wrote, the New Age spirituality in the series is “individualistic, humanistic, eclectic, and rationalized and is understood to be integrated within, rather than opposed to, science.”⁴ More recently, the currently airing *Discovery* series mused on the meaning of faith.

¹ James F. McGrath, Introduction to *Religion and Science Fiction*, James F. McGrath, ed. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 3.

³ Gregory Peterson, “Religion and Science in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*: God, Q, and Evolutionary Eschatology on the Final Frontier,” in *Star Trek and Sacred Ground*, Jennifer E. Porter and Darcee L. McLaren, eds., (Ithaca: State University of New York Press, 1999) 73–75.

⁴ Jennifer Porter and Darcee McLaren, “(Re)Covering Sacred Ground: New Age Spirituality in *Star Trek: Voyager*,” in *Star Trek and Sacred Ground*, 110.

Religious thought plays an even greater role in *BSG*. Moore described his show as “an exploration of ideas and the basis of faith,” which he and the writers included throughout all four seasons.⁵ Indeed, *BSG* the topic has inspired a copious body of scholarship, not all sympathetic. A frustrated Jennifer Stoy, for example, complained that religion “colours and motivates the entire show, which is why it is that much worse that Moore and [writer David] Eick so bungled things.”⁶ In contrast, C.W. Marshall and Matthew Wheeland praised the series’ religious content in their comparison of a Cylon creator to cryptographer I.J. Good’s the “Singularity.”⁷ Inspired by the wide range of opinions and reactions, Charlotte Howell canvassed comments from official recaps, blogs, and social media sites like Reddit in an effort to gauge the mass response—whether rage or praise—that the religious finale of *BSG* provoked.⁸

The overall narrative of *BSG* follows a Biblical structure. As established in the miniseries, *BSG* follows the human remnant as they flee the Cylons and seek the promised land of Earth. Although no one announces that Earth flows with milk and honey, the parallels

⁵ Jeanine Krzyzanowski, “Ronald D. Moore on the Meaning of God in *Battlestar Galactica*’s Finale,” *AMC*, March 24, 2009, <https://www.amc.com/talk/2009/03/ronald-d-moore>.

⁶ Stoy, “Of Great Zeitgeist and Bad Faith,” 16.

⁷ Marshall and Wheeland, “The Cylons, the Singularity, and God.”

⁸ Charlotte Howell, “This Show Was Religious?!: Online Reactions to Religion in *Lost* and *Battlestar Galactica* Finales,” *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture* 5, no. 2 (2016): 297–314. For additional scholarship on religion in *BSG*, see: Erica Hurwitz Andrus, “*Battlestar Galactica* and *Caprica*: Using Religion to Create Imagined Worlds,” in *Revisiting Imaginary Worlds*, Mark J.P. Wolf, ed., 126–45 (New York; London: Routledge, 2017); Anthea D. Butler and Diane Winston, “‘A Vagina Ain’t A Halo’: Gender and Religion in *Saving Grace* and *Battlestar Galactica*” in *Small Screen, Big Picture: Television and Lived Religion*, Diane Winston, ed., 259–288 (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); Chris Klassen, “Research Note: Rejecting Monotheism? Polytheism, Pluralism, and *Battlestar Galactica*,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 23, no. 3 (2008): 355–62; Iver B. Neumann “‘Religion in Sort of a Global Sense’: The Relevance of Religious Practices for Political Community in *Battlestar Galactica* and Beyond,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 26, no. 3 (2011): 387–401; Jutta Wimpler, *Religious Science Fiction in Battlestar Galactica and Caprica: Women as Mediators of the Sacred and Profane* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Publishers, 2015).

between *BSG*'s overarching plot and the twelve tribes of Israel's exodus from Egypt and subsequent wandering in the desert in pursuit of God's promised land are undeniable. The similarities do not end here, however, as prophecies in both the Bible and *The Scrolls of Pythia* ominously predict the leader of the nation will not reach the promised land alive. Moses dies within sight of Israel, while Laura Roslin passes away after spending her final day on Earth.

Furthermore, many of the *BSG* character names are drawn from Biblical and Greek mythological sources. Adama clearly denotes Adam, the Biblical first man. Admiral Cain, a supposed ally who plots to kill Adama and Apollo, harkens to Adam's son Cain who famously commits the first murder. Pilot Karl Agathon takes the call sign "Helo," which means sun and comes directly from Helios, the god of the sun in Greek mythology. Other pilots similarly use Greek call signs, including Lee "Apollo" Adama and Sharon "Athena" Agathon. Most significantly, Helo and Athena name their daughter Hera after the Greek goddess of family, foreshadowing Hera's destiny as modern humanity's Mitochondrial Eve.⁹

Throughout *BSG*, the writers accentuated a sharp contrast between monotheism and polytheism. The Cylons believe in one God and spend the series attempting to fulfill their God's commandments. The beginnings of their beliefs are explored in *Caprica*, the *BSG* prequel that outlines the events prior to the Cylon War. In *Caprica*, a monotheistic scientist implants the digital avatar of his dead daughter into a Cylon Centurion.¹⁰ The Centurion then becomes sentient and spreads her monotheistic beliefs amongst the other Centurions.¹¹ Following the Cylon War, the Centurions depart *Caprica* and meet with the Final Five, who then share their

⁹ We will explore this concept in greater detail throughout Chapter 4.

¹⁰ *Caprica*, season 1, episodes 1 and 2, "Pilot," directed by Jeffrey Reiner, aired January 22, 2010, on Sci-Fi, accessed October 26, 2020, <https://www.nbc.com/caprica>.

¹¹ *Caprica*, season 1, episode 19, "Apotheosis," directed by Jonas Pate, aired November 30, 2010, on Sci-Fi, accessed October 26, 2020, <https://www.nbc.com/caprica>.

resurrection technology and create eight humanoid Cylon models. The Centurions spread their monotheistic beliefs to the Final Five and humanoid models, which results in all the machines believing in the existence of one God. Conversely, the humans pray to the Lords of Kobol. According to the Sacred Scrolls, the humans and gods dwelt together on Kobol (the site of the Opera House ruins) before separating. The Lords of Kobol, as the human gods are known, bear the names of the ancient Greek pantheon: Zeus, Aphrodite, Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Hecate, Hera, and Poseidon. In the *Series Bible*, Moore wrote that each of the Twelve Colonies have varying degrees of religiosity with “some worlds almost completely secular and others verging on fundamentalist.”¹² Roslin, for example, becomes the icon of spirituality at the end of Season 1 as she and her mentor Elosha urge Adama to take *The Scrolls of Pythia* literally and investigate Kobol. By contrast, Adama and Apollo are as cultural believers who acknowledge the importance of the Lords of Kobol publicly but rarely practice those beliefs in the series.

The theology within *BSG* is complex, as there is evidence for the existence of both the Cylon God and the Lords of Kobol. Season 1 ends with the Fleet’s discovery of Kobol and Season 2 follows Roslin’s attempts to find the Tomb of Athena.¹³ Furthermore, the Sacred Scrolls accurately prophesy key events, such as Roslin’s death. Yet the Lords of Kobol do not interact with the humans despite the many prayers they receive. Theologian Kevin J. Wetmore Jr. argued that the Lords of Kobol exist in some form, for the presence of the Tomb of Athena and Arrow of Apollo suggest “some greater level of reality behind the Colonial faith that is not metaphoric.”¹⁴ Yet the existence of the Lords of Kobol does not guarantee their divinity. During

¹² Moore, *Battlestar Galactica: Series Bible*, 5.

¹³ See Appendix B for a complete summary.

¹⁴ Kevin J. Wetmore Jr., *The Theology of Battlestar Galactica: American Christianity in the 2004–2009 Television Series* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012), 24.

Roslin's exploration of Kobol in "Home, Part 2" (2.07), Athena clarifies the Cylons' opinion on the Lords of Kobol:

ATHENA: I think those are the Gates of Hera.

STARBUCK: You think?

ATHENA: I'm putting together a lot of pieces from a lot of sources beyond your scriptures. If I'm right, that's the spot where your gods supposedly stood and watched [the goddess] Athena throw herself down onto the rocks below out of despair over the exodus of the thirteen tribes.

ZAREK: Supposedly? I thought the Cylons believed in the gods.

STARBUCK: Yeah, don't get her started. They believe in one true God or something like that.

ATHENA: And we don't worship false idols.

APOLLO: You were quick enough to come on this mission. Lead us all to some tomb only actually mentioned in our false scriptures.

ATHENA: We know more about your religion than you do. Athena's Tomb, whoever, and whatever she really was, is probably up there. That part is true.¹⁵

As this exchange reveals, the Cylons not only believe in one God, but they also believe that the Lords of Kobol were real but not deities.

The following two chapters argue that one God exists in *BSG* (which we will call the Divine) that he predestined the characters, and that he advances His goals through music. Yet the Divine is neither the monotheistic God of the Cylons nor one of the pantheistic Lords of Kobol. Instead, the Divine is a celestial presence situated somewhere between these extremes.

Discussing the role of Baltar's cult in the advancement of the Divine's design, Wetmore argued that "Baltar's [Divine] is not the Cylon God; there is only one [Divine]. The Cylons have an imperfect understanding of the one true God they worship. Baltar receives his information directly from an angel of [the Divine], whose understanding of [the Divine] is closer to truth than that of the Cylons."¹⁶ Wetmore explained the difference between the Cylon God and the Divine

¹⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 2, episode 7, "Home, Part 2," directed by Jeff Woolnough, aired August 26, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 2.

¹⁶ Wetmore Jr., *The Theology of Battlestar Galactica*, 58.

of the *BSG* universe by noting the Cylons' attack on humanity as a clear divergence from the Divine's purpose, a transgression that Chapter 4 will explore in greater detail. As a result, these chapters will grapple with three separate conceptions of celestial deities: the Lords of Kobol, the Cylon God, and the Divine as he operates throughout the series.

We can initially ascertain the presence and desires of the Divine through Head Six. The angel prophetically utters the first line of the series' first episode: "[The Divine] has a plan for you, Gaius. He has a plan for everything and everyone."¹⁷ Throughout *BSG*, Head Six reassures Baltar that the Divine declared him the Chosen One.¹⁸ At first glance, the scientist seems an unlikely savior: he unintentionally caused the mass nuclear slaughter of the Twelve Colonies, failed as the President of the Colonies in Season 3, and often lied and conspired against the human protagonists like Adama and Roslin.¹⁹ Despite Baltar's flaws, however, Head Six always accompanies him and prods him towards his redemption and higher destiny. Baltar struggles with Head Six's identity throughout the show, questioning if a secretly implanted Cylon chip in his head causes him to see her and often begging her for answers.²⁰ In "Downloaded" (2.18), which centers around Caprica Six and Boomer, viewers learn that an incorporeal Baltar similarly accompanies Caprica Six in her daily life.²¹ Head Baltar returns throughout Season 4, notably as he speaks with the human Baltar in "Six of One."²² The Messengers, as Head Six and Head

¹⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, "33."

¹⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Parts 1 and 2."

¹⁹ See Appendices A and B.

²⁰ Head Six regularly provokes Baltar's conspiracy theories, including his idea that she is a coping mechanism by Baltar's subconscious to grapple with his role in humanity's downfall. In "Home, Part 2," Baltar undergoes a brain scan in search of answers and finally accepts that Head Six is not the result of a chip implant or a chemical imbalance.

²¹ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 2.5, episode 18, "Downloaded," directed by Jeff Woolnough, aired February 24, 2006, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2006), disc 3.

²² *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4, episode 2, "Six of One," directed by Anthony Hemingway, aired April 11, 2008, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2008), disc 2.

Baltar are called, claim to be “angels of [the Divine]” and zealously espouse religious rhetoric.²³ According to the Messengers, their mere presence demonstrates that the Divine exists. The existence of the Opera House and Baltar’s destiny as the savior of humanity similarly fulfills the Divine’s intentions.

Figure 31: Baltar and Head Baltar²⁴



The existence of the Divine is further supported through the music of *BSG*. In the Opera House at the end of Season 1, Head Six proselytizes Baltar: “Life has a melody, Gaius. A rhythm of notes that become your existence once played in harmony with [the Divine]’s plan.”²⁵ Initially, music seems merely to function as a metaphor here, but the quotation alludes to the larger narrative arc that runs throughout all four seasons of the series. Music is indistinguishable

²³ In Greek, Messengers translates directly to ayyelos, or angels, which further underlines the religious connotations of these beings. *Battlestar Galactica*, “Home, Part 2.”

²⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Six of One.”

²⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.”

from life and, more importantly, it maneuvers the characters into fulfilling the Divine's objectives. As explored in Chapter 1, the music accompanying this dramatic moment within the Opera House features *The Shape of Things to Come*, a leitmotif that McCreary named after Baltar's destiny. As the series progresses, however, the music complementing the theologically significant scenes undergoes an important transformation, migrating from the invisible orchestral score to the realm of the characters. The theology within *BSG* thus becomes implicated within one of the most fundamental, and contested, distinctions of film music: the opposition of diegetic and non-diegetic music.

The following two chapters will examine the different ways in which the score of *BSG* revolutionized the use of diegetic and non-diegetic music within a television series in order to portray the workings of the Divine. The theological framework of *BSG* is complex and, I will argue, McCreary's musical treatment is equally complex. The present chapter will explore the ways in which the Divine communicates with His creations, drawing upon Ben Winters's theory of intradiegetic music and Michel Chion's concept of the *acousmètre*. In particular, Chapter 3 will analyze the diegetic music in the Season 3 finale and the intradiegetic music throughout Season 4 to determine the ways that music aids in the discovery of Earth. The last chapter will then build on this argument, noting how the diegetic and intradiegetic music unite in the final episodes of the series to save humanity and begin a new world where Cylons and humans live in harmony. Chapter 4 will use Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of *la mestiza* theory to evaluate the music surrounding the cyborg child Hera Agathon and to discuss how McCreary portrays her hybrid identity.²⁶ These two chapters will thus knit together the arguments from the previous chapters

²⁶ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, fourth edition (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

and show how identity and destiny unite through music to fulfill the unfathomable plan of *BSG*'s Divine.

Disembodied Music

The Season 3 two-episode finale, “Crossroads, Parts 1 and 2,” demonstrates how integral a role music plays within the narrative of *BSG*. In these episodes, the Colonial Fleet approaches the Ionian Nebula (a supernova remnant), which they believe is a signpost to Earth. As the Fleet nears the Nebula, Tigh, Tyrol, Foster, and Anders begin to notice whispers of music following them through their daily life. This disembodied music is omnipresent, but its source remains unknown. As the characters grow more paranoid over the haunting melody, they question the music’s source: is it celestial interference or Cylon sabotage?

The study of disembodied music in film is not new. Michel Chion’s theory of the *acousmêtre* laid the groundwork for scholarship. The *acousmêtre*, Chion argued, is a “character whose relationship to the screen involves a specific kind of ambiguity and oscillation.”²⁷ More specifically, Chion described the *acousmêtre* as neither inside nor outside of the screen. Although the source of the sound does not appear inside the screen as a mouth, a radio, or any other physical object, the source is also established outside the screen, like an announcer’s voice or bird song. Chion’s endowed this mysterious filmic being with god-like attributes: “First, the *acousmêtre* has the power of *seeing all*; second, the power of *omniscience*; and third, the *omnipotence* to act on the situation. Let us add that in many cases there is also a gift of *ubiquity*—the *acousmêtre* seems to be able to be anywhere he or she wishes.”²⁸ In possession of

²⁷ Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, Claudia Gorbman, trans., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 129.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 120–130.

these transcendent abilities, the source of the sound seems equal to that of a celestial being. As Walter Murch put it, the *acousmètre* has “no defined limits to its power.”²⁹

Yet the disembodied music in “Crossroads” departs from a central convention of Chion’s *acousmètre*. Typically, the *acousmètre* is unmasked and stripped of its mysterious nature, and thereby loses its divine powers. The *acousmètre* is often “instantly dispossessed of its mysterious powers,” explained Chion, “when it is *de-acousmatized*, when the film reveals the face that is the source of the voice.”³⁰ The ubiquity and omniscience of the Wizard of Oz, for example, vanishes entirely when Toto pulls back the curtain to reveal the man behind the machine. Similarly, the disembodied voice that viewers hear in *Psycho* loses its abstruseness when sound and image meet.³¹ In “Crossroads,” however, the source of the sound is just as remarkable as the sound itself. The music at first seems to emanate from the Ionian Nebula, which serves to enhance the omnipotence of the *acousmètre* rather than dispossess it. Unlike the Wizard and Norman Bates, the Ionian Nebula does not lose its power. The source is neither a human nor a Cylon creation, but rather that of a supernatural being or beings.

The first time the audience hears the disembodied music is through the ears of Tigh and Anders. While fiddling with a radio, Tigh starts to catch strains of a tune not heard previously on *BSG*. As he tries to eliminate the static, Anders hears an eerie melody:

ANDERS (to Tigh): There, go back, you almost had it.
GALACTICA OFFICER: Had what?
ANDERS: That song. You don’t hear that song?
OFFICER: No. Come on, let’s go.³²

²⁹ Walter Murch, foreward to *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, by Michel Chion (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), xxiii.

³⁰ Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 130.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

³² *Battlestar Galactica*, “Crossroads, Part 1.”

The *Galactica* officer cannot hear this music, even though Anders, Tigh, and the audience can. Anders shakes his head, clearly concerned that he is hearing things, but Tigh continues to tinker at the radio. Furthermore, although Anders spoke to Tigh during this scene, Tigh does not acknowledge that he heard this exchange. The audience knows that both Anders and Tigh hear this music, but Tigh himself does not yet seem aware.

Tigh's paranoia deepens when he discovers that no one else can hear the haunting music. He reaches this turning point at a crucial moment, during the trial of Gaius Baltar. Since Baltar was the President of the Colonies on New Caprica and surrendered to the Cylons, he spends the latter half of Season 3 in jail awaiting his trial for war crimes.³³ Tigh, as the leader of the resistance, sits as a witness to the atrocities committed by the Cylons and, by extension, Baltar. It is clear to those in attendance at the trial that Tigh is drunk as he slurs his words, fails to answer the prosecution's questions, and reminisces in shame about his late wife while on the stand. He pauses during this diatribe, however, as the music returns. Tigh shows astonishment that there is music in the courtroom, remarking to the lawyer, "You hear that? They're playing music in here now?"³⁴ The rest of the characters look about confusedly, unable to hear the melody.

Tigh's derangement reaches its nadir when he decides that the music is a tool of the Cylons. Following Baltar's trial, Tigh continues his drunken ramblings in his room, only pausing when the eerie melody returns once more. He slowly starts to move his ear against the wall, methodically moving furniture in an attempt to locate its source. Eventually Tigh falls to the floor, convincing himself that the music is embedded within the structure of *Galactica* itself as he

³³ Baltar also plays an important role in the development of theology in the *BSG* narrative, as he spends his time in jail writing a manifesto about existence of one God. After he is found not guilty, he then finds solace and housing with his disciples. See Appendix B.

³⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Crossroads, Part 1."

loses control and yells, “It’s in the ship! It’s in the frakkin’ ship!”³⁵ Tigh attempts to convince Adama as well:

TIGH: I’m telling you, Bill, they put the music in the ship. I can hear it.

ADAMA: I believe you. We’ll look into it.

TIGH: Look into it? Look into it? I’m here telling you there is Cylon sabotage on board our ship.

ADAMA: Sabotage. With music?

TIGH: I know, I know, I can’t quite understand it myself. *There’s too much confusion... There must be some kind of way outta here.*³⁶

From the look on Adama’s face, it is obvious that he believes his friend is no longer sane. Tigh, too, can tell that Adama does not believe him. Tigh retreats to his quarters, secure in his belief of Cylon treachery through the disembodied melody and convinced that he alone can hear it.

Figure 32: Tigh attempts to locate the source of the disembodied music³⁷



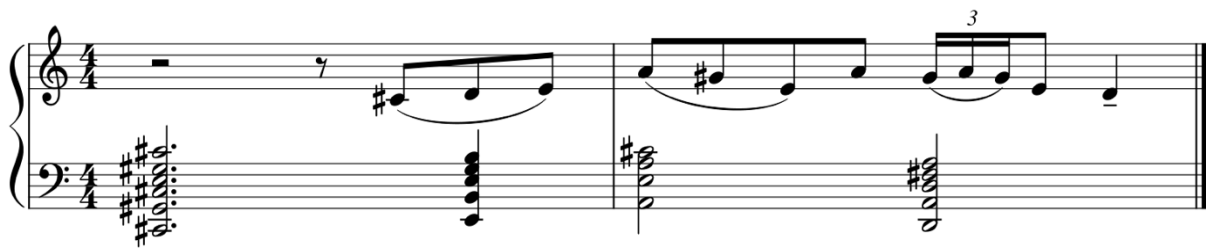
³⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Crossroads, Part 1.”

³⁶ Emphasis added. *Battlestar Galactica*, “Crossroads, Part 2.”

³⁷ *Ibid.*

The music that plagues Tigh fits well within the soundscape of *BSG*. Tigh hears the music regularly, but the instrumentation changes in each iteration, including segments by the electric sitar, harmonium, duduk, yayli tanbur, and electric violin.³⁸ The melody itself includes a D natural, which suggests a Phrygian scale on C# (see Figure 33). Furthermore, the melody does not resolve down to C#, which serves to add an “ethnic” flavor, as McCreary termed it, to the music.³⁹ Contrary to Tigh’s beliefs, however, the music hints that it is not merely a Cylon creation. As explored in Chapter 2, most of the Cylon leitmotifs are monotonous and primitive, emphasizing rhythm over melody. The intriguing melody that haunts Tigh, however, indicates a different source than the Cylons.

Figure 33: The Disembodied Music⁴⁰



On first hearing, it seems as though the Ionian Nebula, which the Colonial Fleet is searching for, is the *acousmètre*. *BSG* initially introduced the Ionian Nebula in “Rapture,” the episode in which Number Three D’Anna has visions of the Final Five (see Chapter 1). In this episode, the Colonial Fleet completes their search for the Temple of Five, which will supposedly provide an artifact, the Eye of Jupiter, pointing the way to Earth. The Temple of Five itself

³⁸ McCreary, “BG3: ‘Crossroads, Pt. II,’” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, March 25, 2007, accessed July 13, 2019, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg3-crossroads-part-ii/>.

³⁹ McCreary labels this music as ethnic in his online commentary but does not further specify. Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

serves as religious symbol for both the monotheistic Cylons and the polytheistic humans. The Cylons see the Temple as a sanctuary built by the Final Five to worship the Cylon God. In humanity's Sacred Scrolls, however, the temple was built by the Thirteenth Tribe, who settled Earth. Unbeknownst to Roslin and the other polytheistic believers, however, the Thirteenth Tribe was comprised of Cylons. As a result, the temple that they believe was built to worship the Lords of Kobol was actually consecrated to the Cylon God.⁴¹ The temple leads the humans directly to the Ionian Nebula found in "Crossroads." They discover that the Eye of Jupiter is a supernova remnant and that the Thirteenth Tribe of Kobol used a similar nova in the Ionian system as a marker. As a result, they journey towards the supernova in the Ionian Nebula in order to follow the Thirteenth Tribe's path to Earth.

Indeed, the disembodied music grows stronger as the Fleet approaches the supernova. Anders notes the music emitting from Tigh's radio, but assumes he is hearing things. Later in the Galactica bar, Anders and Foster both hear the radio static give way to the familiar melody. Foster, who had just been scolded by Roslin for her ragged appearance and increasingly ill-tempered behavior, sits wallowing in self-pity when the music begins. She looks up and catches the eye of Anders, who similarly perked up when he heard the static change again. The two share a fleeting, intense look. In the next scene, it becomes clear that the look Anders and Foster exchanged was one of lust, not recognition. Foster emerges, scantily clad, from Anders bunk and begins to pull on her clothes before Anders pulls her back down. The two share a moment of passion until the mysterious music again wafts through the halls of Galactica. Mimicking the movement of the sound, the camera twists and turns down the hallway towards the pair before

⁴¹ Battlestar Galactica, "Rapture."

zooming in on Foster's ear, as if to show the soundwaves hitting her eardrum. Foster pulls back, annoyed that she is once more hearing the tune:

FOSTER: What is that music? Gods.

ANDERS: What did you just say?⁴²

For the first time, Anders recognizes that someone else hears the disembodied music. Before he can question Foster, however, his crewmates bang on the door and demand to be let in. The scene then abruptly shifts, suggesting that Anders never communicated his confusion with Foster before she left his quarters.

At the other end of Galactica, Tyrol also hears the music. During Foster's and Anders's liaison, Tyrol awakens from sleep humming a melody. He seems unsure of its origins, but viewers can recognize it as the same tune plaguing Tigh, Anders, and Foster. He quickly leaves his room, choosing instead to wander the halls of Galactica and listen to the disembodied sounds. Tyrol's reaction is unlike that of the others: while Tigh became more paranoid, Foster more irritable, and Anders more confused, Tyrol seems to find the music enjoyable and peaceful. He leans against the walls of Galactica, humming and listening, even though he remains ignorant of the melody's source. Although Tyrol does not understand how he knows this music, he seems comforted by its presence.

Several scenes later, Tyrol realizes that he is not the only one hearing this music as Anders confronts him. Anders stands on the deck of Galactica training to be a pilot, but quickly loses focus on his task when he hears Tyrol humming to himself. Abandoning his classmates, Anders confronts Tyrol about the music:

ANDERS: That song you're humming. What is that?

TYROL: Oh, uh, you know what, I don't even know. It's just something I can't get out of my head. *It's way outta here?*

⁴² *Battlestar Galactica*, "Crossroads, Part 2."

ANDERS: I've been hearing that. Everywhere. The boombox, the bar.
TYROL: You hear that song?
ANDERS: Yea, and it's freaking me out. I hear it everywhere but I can't really hear it. You know what I mean?
TYROL: Yea, it's like you can grab part of the melody and then it just goes away, like it's...
TYROL AND ANDERS (simultaneously) From childhood.
Anders: Yea, exactly.⁴³

The two stare at each other in shock but, once more, the moment abruptly breaks off as Anders's commanding officer demands he return to his duty. As Tyrol watches Anders walk away, the music grows louder and louder. The melody is the same that the four have been hearing throughout "Crossroads," but this occurrence is non-diegetic. Tyrol and Anders do not seem to hear this last, emphatic pronouncement of the melody, serves instead as a moment of foreshadowing for the viewers.

Although the Colonial Fleet's arrival at the Ionian Nebula brings answers to the four characters, the *acousmêtre* is never unmasked. The source of the music remains frustratingly unclear to viewers. The "Crossroads" finale seems to suggest that the Nebula is the *acousmêtre*, but Season 4 complicates this assumption. In "Someone to Watch Over Me" (4.17), Starbuck realizes that she knows the same disembodied melody that Tigh, Tyrol, Foster, and Anders hear throughout the Season 3 finale. This revelation establishes that the music did not come from the Ionian Nebula, as Starbuck recognizes the melody from her childhood.⁴⁴ What, then, is the source of the omniscient, omnipresent, and ubiquitous music? The *acousmêtre*, I will argue, has been planted in the series' universe by the Divine. Its music calls out to the Final Five and thereby sets the divine plan in motion. Indeed, this disembodied music plays a key role in the

⁴³ Emphasis added. *Battlestar Galactica*, "Crossroads, Part 2."

⁴⁴ Chapter 4 will explore "Someone to Watch Over Me" and the disembodied music's role in Starbuck's life more thoroughly.

series' overall narrative arc, which transcends the limited interests of either the Cylon or human gods.

At the Ionian Nebula

Music drives the narrative following the Colonial Fleet's arrival at the Ionian Nebula. Until this moment, the music of *BSG* has consisted mainly of non-diegetic music, that is, leitmotifs that trace character development and the divisions between human and Cylon. When the battleship arrives at the supernova, however, music emerges as if from the heavens itself. The disembodied music that haunted Tigh, Tyrol, Foster, and Anders grows from an eerie motif into a fully developed melody. The tune, which the characters soon recognize as Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower," overtakes the final act of the episode. The fleet's arrival at the Ionian Nebula sets multiple narrative forces into motion, which maneuver the characters into their predestined actions. As "All Along the Watchtower" permeates the season's last scenes, Baltar joins a religious cult, Roslin returns to her role as the prophesized "dying leader," four of the Final Five learn of their identities as Cylons, the Opera House visions grow stronger, and Starbuck returns from the dead to fulfill her destiny.

The shift into the final act and the growing musical influence of "All Along the Watchtower" happens after the Fleet jumps to the Ionian Nebula. Within seconds of arriving at the supernova, chaos ensues. Lights flicker and the power dramatically cuts out on all ships across the Colonial Fleet. Onboard *Galactica*, the CIC screens fill with static as the panicked crew anticipates that a Cylon attack is imminent. Furthermore, the camera zooms in on Roslin, blurring the background behind her as the president clutches her head and nearly faints into Adama's arms. Although the source of Roslin's sudden illness is unclear, it seems linked to the earlier admission that she has cancer returned and that she is once more dying. Roslin evaded

death through a transfusion from the half-human, half-Cylon Hera, but in “Crossroads” she resumes the role of dying leader. The Roslin/Kobol leitmotif typically accompanies Roslin’s moments when she speaks of her spirituality, but it does not return during this scene. Instead, Roslin’s fainting spell does not include any music. As previously noted, the Twelve Colonies’ polytheistic beliefs led them to the Ionian Nebula, so the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif would be expected to emphasize their victory. Yet the only music that occurs from the Fleet’s jump to the supernova until the end of the episode is “All Along the Watchtower.”

Further emphasizing the associations between monotheism and the Ionian Nebula, the Opera House visions return once more to Caprica Six. As we saw, Head Six described the Divine’s plan to Baltar in “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2” as they walked through the ruins of the Kobol Opera House. The writers further developed this theme through Roslin’s and Athena’s visions of the Opera House, suggesting that these women are also caught up in the Divine’s objectives. Caprica Six shares these hazy visions in “Crossroads, Part 1,” but the vision comes to full fruition after the leap to the Ionian Nebula. As Roslin faints in the CIC, Caprica Six finds herself in the Opera House once more. As always, strains of *The Shape of Things to Come* fill the air as Caprica Six and Baltar approach the stage with Hera. The music abruptly shifts, however, as Caprica Six turns to the balcony. The Cylon looks up in shock at five glowing figures on the balcony, reminiscent of D’Anna’s visions in “Rapture.”⁴⁵ Although their faces are indistinguishable, the music foreshadows their identities. The disembodied music that followed Tigh, Anders, Tyrol, and Foster throughout “Crossroads” now resounds throughout the Opera House. For the first time in this two-part finale, the motif is not subtle. Whatever Caprica Six’s

⁴⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Rapture.”

destiny is within the Opera House and her role in the Divine's plan, the five glowing figures accompany her.⁴⁶

Figure 34: (From left to right) Caprica Six, Athena, and Roslin discuss the Opera House⁴⁷



These scenes all lead into the climactic ending of “Crossroads” as the Final Five discover their true identities. Tyrol walks the deck of Galactica, disoriented as the lights flicker around him. People are talking, but he cannot hear them; instead, music surrounds Tyrol. In one brief moment, Tyrol jerks back into reality, the camera resolution sharpens, and the ambient sound abruptly returns. As this happens, Tyrol’s eyes widen as he comes to a sudden realization: “There must be some way outta here.”⁴⁸ The camera cuts to Tigh, still pressing his ear against

⁴⁶ In “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2,” these five figures were initially illuminated banners. The banners remain on stage, but the figures stand on a balcony gazing down at Caprica Six, Baltar, and Hera.

⁴⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Crossroads, Part 2.”

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

the door, who utters: “said the Joker to the thief.”⁴⁹ Swirling away from Tigh, the camera zooms in on Anders, rubbing his fingers into his temple, stating “there’s too much confusion,” before changing to Foster vomiting while uttering: “I can’t get no relief.” Although these phrases are seemingly innocuous and random, viewers familiar with “All Along the Watchtower” would immediately recognize them as the opening lyrics of the famous Dylan song. Hints of these lyrics occur throughout “Crossroads, Parts 1 and 2,” but the characters seemed confused by their meaning. After their arrival at the Ionian Nebula, however, the meaning of the lyrics becomes clear to Tyrol, Foster, Anders, and Tigh.

Along with the lyrics to “All Along the Watchtower,” the four also recognize the song’s melody. Their journey to remembrance begins as each of characters slowly make their way to a central location, shocked as they have finally remembered their Cylon identities. Together, the four express their terror at this realization, though Foster abruptly stops all conversation when she starts to hum the refrain stuck in her head. One by one the other Final Five members join her, adding to this communal moment of song (see Figure 35). For the first time, the audience hears the melody of “All Along the Watchtower” instead of the melodic riff that follows them throughout “Crossroads.” The simple tune hummed by the Final Five immediately associates the melody of “All Along the Watchtower” with the disembodied music that haunted them throughout the episode. The dialogue in “Crossroads, Part 1” hinted at this correlation as the characters uttered lyrics from “All Along the Watchtower” as they heard the eerie music. McCreary further underlined the connections between the two through his use of C#-minor harmonies: what was once a subtle harmonic nod under a Phrygian melody now becomes the main tonality in “All Along the Watchtower.” Although the audience only heard the disembodied

⁴⁹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Crossroads, Part 2.”

team of horses. And he gives back the answer: ‘Babylon has fallen, has fallen! All the images of its gods lie shattered on the ground!’” (Isaiah 21: 6-9, New International Version)

This passage refers to the exile of the Jewish people in Babylon and their eventual return to the promised land and holy city Jerusalem. Fittingly, “Crossroads” ends with a camera shot of Earth, the analogous holy place of *BSG*. The resonances with the Biblical narrative doubtless motivated the choice of “All Along the Watchtower” for this pivotal episode.⁵²

The lyrics of “All Along the Watchtower” are deeply theological. Originally composed by Bob Dylan, the song debuted on his 1967 album, *John Wesley Harding*. The song’s narrative seems deliberately ambiguous, as it centers around a joker and a thief attempting to escape a watchtower:

“There must be some kind of way out of here,” said the joker to the thief
“There’s too much confusion, I can’t get no relief
Businessmen, they drink my wine, plowmen dig my earth
None of them along the line know what any of it is worth”

“No reason to get excited,” the thief, he kindly spoke
“There are many here among us who feel that life is but a joke
But you and I, we’ve been through that, and this is not our fate
So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late”

All along the watchtower, princes kept the view

⁵² In an interview following the series’ finale, Ron Moore stated that he had long been wanting to use “All Along the Watchtower” in one of his shows: “I had personally been obsessed with the song for a while. So, I had - I just thought it was a fascinating song and the lyrics. I had wanted to work it into a project of mine since, you know, for the last several years. In fact I wanted to do a whole Roswell episode about it. So it was just sort of always in the back of my mind. And as we started talking about music and using music as a trigger, I just immediately said oh and it has to be “All Along the Watchtower”. Everybody kind of laughed. Then I just was very much, you know, dogged about it. And kept going and made, you know, and then we got the rights. And that became the song.” Although Moore asserted here that the song was only used because of his obsession with it, the correlations between the song’s lyrics and *BSG*’s narrative arc is too coincidental to not play a role in the decision. Kelly West, “Full Interview with *Battlestar Galactica*’s Ron Moore and David Eick,” in *Collider*, January 7, 2009, <https://www.cinemablend.com/television/Full-Interview-With-Battlestar-Galactica-Ron-Moore-David-Eick-14472.html>.

While all the women came and went, barefoot servants, too

Outside in the distance a wildcat did growl
Two riders were approaching, the wind began to howl

Christopher Ricks noted the narrative spiral of the lyrics, arguing that the last two lines also serve as an introduction to the opening of the song. On this reading, the song never fully ends, but circles continuously.⁵³ Philippe Margotin and Jean-Michel Guesdon suggested several possible interpretations for this song, including “existentialism, biblical metaphor, quest for truth” as well as the indictment of “an imperfect and perverted world.”⁵⁴ A more literal interpretation reads Bob Dylan as the joker and his manager, Albert Grossman, as the thief.

Both “All Along the Watchtower” and *John Wesley Harding* are full of apocalyptic imagery. In an interview with Jonathan Cott, Dylan explained that the album is “a restless disc that reflects fear.”⁵⁵ The song in particular creates an eerie atmosphere, mainly through its sparse instrumentation. Utilizing only voice, harmonica, guitar, bass, and drums, Dylan evoked a vast, open, and terrifying vision of the apocalypse. The harmonica wails, imitating the “howling wind” while Dylan’s vocal melodic line supplies panic and insecurity to the song by wavering on pitches and rhythms. The bass and drums also drive the song’s momentum, keeping a fast and steady tempo until the abrupt end of the piece.

The apocalyptic vision in “All Along the Watchtower” is transformed in Jimi Hendrix’s cover of Dylan’s original. The turnaround for the song was quick: Columbia released *John Wesley Harding* on December 27, 1967 and Hendrix’s cover, featuring Dave Mason and Brian

⁵³ Christopher Ricks, *Dylan’s Visions of Sin* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003), 360.

⁵⁴ Philippe Margotin and Jean-Michel Guesdon, *Bob Dylan: All the Songs: The Story Behind Every Track* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2015), 288.

⁵⁵ Johnathan Cott, ed., *Bob Dylan: The Essential Interviews* (New York: Wenner, 2006) as found in Margotin and Guesdon, *Bob Dylan*, 288.

Jones, appeared on January 21, 1968. Eddie Kramer, Hendrix's sound engineer, discussed the attraction of Dylan's song for Hendrix: "[Hendrix] loved Bob Dylan...He was fascinated by the color of the lyrics and the tone of the lyrics, and of course the chord sequences were wonderful, too."⁵⁶ Instead of following Dylan's vision of an empty apocalypse and his sparse instrumentation, Hendrix opted to portray a boldly dramatic, intense, ominous, and chaotic apocalypse through dense instrumentation. Utilizing several electric guitars, an acoustic guitar, a twelve-string acoustic guitar, bass, and multiple percussion instruments, Hendrix filled "All Along the Watchtower" with sound. Electric guitars wail in high registers, the percussion drive the rhythm, and Hendrix practically yells the lyrics at times. Hendrix's turbulent cover of the song soon gained popularity and is often known today as the definitive version of the piece. Even Dylan recognized the power of Hendrix's interpretation and later would incorporate this alternative evocation of the apocalypse into his own live performances of the song.⁵⁷

Both Dylan's original and Hendrix's cover influenced the final product of "All Along the Watchtower" used in *BSG*. In his online commentary, McCreary explained his reaction to finding out that producers wanted him to use the song as the centerpiece of the episode:

I had dozens of questions. What should it sound like? Which version of the song should we reference, if any? Do we want a performer who can sing and play guitar exactly like Dylan? Or Hendrix?...I learned that the idea was not that Bob Dylan necessarily exists in the characters' universe, but that an artist on one of the colonies may have recorded a song with the exact same melody and lyrics. Perhaps this unknown performer and Dylan pulled inspiration from a common, ethereal source. I was told to make no musical reference to any 'Earthly' versions, Hendrix, Dylan, or any others. The arrangement needed to sound like a pop song that belonged in the *Galactica* universe, not our own.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Richie Unterberger, Interview with Charlie McCoy, as found in Margotin and Guesdon, *Bob Dylan*, 289.

⁵⁷ Margotin and Guesdon, *Bob Dylan*, 289.

⁵⁸ McCreary, "BG3: Crossroads, Part II."

Although the producers instructed McCreary not to directly quote Dylan or Hendrix, his arrangement is still clearly influenced by the instrumentation of two works. The dense instrumentation, combined with McCreary's use of electric guitar as the primary timbre shows Hendrix's influence, especially since the instrument seldom appears previously in *BSG* and is never the principal melodic instrument in leitmotifs. Musical traits, such as key and tempo, remain from Dylan's original. McCreary kept Dylan's melody in C# minor, but changed the tuning to keep the depth and power of Hendrix's version:

The recording is in the key of C#m, most likely recorded with a capo, since the voicings of the guitar chords are high and thin. He certainly wasn't going for a "big" sound. For Hendrix's performance, he lowered it to Cm, to get more power out of the guitars and bass. My arrangement is in the original C#m, but instead of using a capo to go UP to C#m, we drop-tuned the bass and guitars DOWN to C#m. You run the risk of the track sounding flabby and bottom-heavy, but with the right arrangement and talented musicians, this trick, creates a massive guitar sound... That is the kind of depth and power I wanted to infuse into my arrangement of Watchtower, while simultaneously acknowledging Dylan's original choice of key.⁵⁹

McCreary also kept Dylan's original tempo. McCreary's arrangement thus combines elements from Dylan's and Hendrix's performances while maintaining *BSG*'s own individual musical sound.

McCreary's instrumentation of "All Along the Watchtower" plays an essential role in integrating the song into the *BSG* soundscape. In his blog, McCreary wrote about his process composing the piece:

Musically, my arrangement is almost entirely an original composition. Only the vocal melody and lyrics remain from Dylan's piece. I initially replaced Dylan's harmonica solos with an electric sitar. But why stop there? The entire arrangement evolved in an Indian sound, with the inclusion of tabla and harmonic minor scale tones. I even bought a harmonium, imported from Delhi, and laid down the drones myself.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ McCreary, "BG3: 'Crossroads, Pt. II'."

⁶⁰ Ibid.

To the harmonium, electric sitar, and tabla McCreary added standard *BSG* instruments such as the duduk and yialli tanbur. He supplemented this wall of sound with the zurna, a woodwind instrument used throughout the Middle East and North Africa for folk songs. The use of a woodwind folk instrument in “All Along the Watchtower” adds to the mysterious timbre of the music, though McCreary also had practical application for the zurna, saying that it is “the loudest instrument in the entire world, and the only ethnic woodwind shrill enough to cut through a wall of electric guitars.”⁶¹ The instruments combine to create a dense wall of sound with a variety of timbres to emphasize the confusion and chaos surrounding the Final Five disclosure.

The final correlations between “All Along the Watchtower” and religious destiny occurs at the culmination of “Crossroads, Part II.” As Tigh, Tyrol, Anders, and Foster return to their battle stations, a bass guitar begins to drone out an anxious rhythm while the electric sitar plays the melody of the disembodied music. With this transition, the diegetic categorization of “All Along the Watchtower” becomes ambiguous. The Final Five potentially no longer hear the music, so how can we label its diegesis?

The binarism of diegetic and non-diegetic music has a long and complicated history of scholarship. Drawing on Gérard Genette’s narratological theory, Claudia Gorbman defined diegetic music as “music that (apparently) issues from a source within a narrative.”⁶² Daniel Percheron and Marcia Butzel pushed this even further to include two forms of diegetic music: onscreen and offscreen.⁶³ Onscreen diegetic music encompasses all types that the characters can

⁶¹ McCreary, “BG3: ‘Crossroads, Pt. II.’”

⁶² Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 22. See Gérard Genette, “D’un récit baroque,” in *Figures*, v. II (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 211.

⁶³ Daniel Percheron and Marcia Butzel, “Sound in Cinema and Its Relationship to Image and Diegesis,” *Yale French Studies*, no. 60 (1980): 16–23.

hear and the viewers can see, such as a band playing in view of the camera. Offscreen diegetic music, however, is music that is heard but not seen, like a jukebox outside of the camera view. As a result, Percheron and Butzel expanded the original dichotomy to a trichotomy: onscreen diegetic, offscreen diegetic, and offscreen non-diegetic.

Scholarship surrounding musical diegesis has continued to evolve as scholars have problematized the dichotomy of diegetic and non-diegetic music. Robynn Stilwell, for example, noted that not all music falls easily into either category:

The trajectory of music between diegetic and nondiegetic highlights a gap in our understanding, a place of destabilization and ambiguity. The diegetic and nondiegetic are conceived as separate realms, almost like two adjacent bubbles, and there seems to be little possibility of moving from one to the other without piercing the skin that explodes the two “universes.”⁶⁴

This “fantastical gap,” as Stilwell termed it, encompasses all sound and music that does not obviously fit into diegetic and non-diegetic divisions. Jeff Smith, however, rebutted Stilwell’s theory, arguing that it does not exist and is a fuzzy solution to the problem of diegetic and non-diegetic music. Instead, Smith posited, all music that Stilwell attributed to the fantastical gap is both diegetic and a product of spatial displacement.⁶⁵ Smith gives an example of the opening of *Iron Man*, in which AC/DC’s “Back in Black” begins seemingly non-diegetically, loudly accompanying establishing shots, before the camera quickly zooms in on a car radio. The radio, arguably, is always the source of the music, but also spatially displaced. Valerio Sbravatti

⁶⁴ Robynn J. Stilwell, “The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic,” in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, Lawrence Kramer, Richard Leppert, and Daniel Ira Goldmark, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 186.

⁶⁵ Jeff Smith, “Bridging the Gap: Reconsidering the Border between Diegetic and Nondiegetic Music,” *Music and the Moving Image* 2, no. 1 (2009): 22–23.

expanded the division further, introducing Morris Holbrook's term "ambidiegetic."⁶⁶ According to Holbrook, ambidiegetic music is that which helps propel dramatic action forward, such as a man singing a song to win over a lover, and is always onscreen. Sbravatti, however, argued that ambidiegetic can also be offscreen, which culminates in five categories of distinction: onscreen diegetic, offscreen diegetic, offscreen non-diegetic, onscreen ambidiegetic, and offscreen ambidiegetic.⁶⁷

The scene in which the Final Five return to their battle stations seems to become offscreen non-diegetic music. As they walk through the halls of Galactica, the music overtakes the soundtrack. And yet, just because they do not acknowledge that they hear it does not mean that they do not. As a result, this ambiguity seems to place the song into Stilwell's fantastical gap, a gray area for film music not easily categorized.⁶⁸

As the camera moves through each subsequent shot, Dylan's lyrics begin. Although both the piece's melody and opening lyrics already occurred in the episode, this is the first time that they appear together as a complete song. Furthermore, McCreary layers his own composition—that of the disembodied music—over Dylan's melody (see Figure 37). The melodies play in counterpoint with each other and are aided by a driving bass line. McCreary transforms the chordal harmonies he used as eerie accompaniment in previous scenes into the rhythmic ostinato, which resolves McCreary's melody down to C# as each new phrase begins. As a result, Dylan's

⁶⁶ Valerio Sbravatti, "Story-Music / Discourse-Music: Analyzing the Relationship between Placement and Function of Music in Films," *Music and the Moving Image* 9, no. 3 (2016): 21. Morris Holbrook, *Music, Movies, Meaning, and Markets: Cinemajazzamatazz* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 56–58.

⁶⁷ Sbravatti, "Story-Music / Discourse-Music," 21.

⁶⁸ Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," 186.

simple “All Along the Watchtower” melody in C#-minor becomes layered with the Phrygian disembodied music to create a counterpoint that fits within the aural world of *BSG*.

Figure 37: “All Along the Watchtower” and the Disembodied Music⁶⁹

The image displays a musical score for two systems. The first system contains two measures of music. The vocal line (top staff) is in C# minor, 4/4 time, with lyrics: "There must be some kind of way out - ta here,". The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) features a Phrygian mode melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system also contains two measures. The vocal line has lyrics: "said the jo - ker to the thief". The piano accompaniment continues with the same Phrygian mode melody and bass line. The score is written in C# minor (two sharps) and 4/4 time.

The present of music inside and outside of the diegesis continues to evolve in the scene. The camera transitions through each of the main characters: the Final Four arrive at their destinations, Adama and Roslin look on as they anticipate a Cylon attack, and Apollo decides to take a Viper out to fight with his fellow pilots. According to Smith’s argument, the music is also spatially displaced, as Tigh, Anders, Foster, and Tyrol do not acknowledge that they hear “All Along the Watchtower” continue after their initial meeting. This complicated mixing of diegesis leaves more questions than answers. Can the Final Five still hear the music or is it now music for the audience only? What is the purpose of “All Along the Watchtower” fading in and out of

⁶⁹ Used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

diegesis? Will this music return or does it only serve to emphasize the religious importance of this moment? The color palate of the supernova further enhances the immensity of the moment.

Apollo's Viper hurtles through the Ionian Nebula, which is lit up with deep purples and golds that contrast starkly with the deep grays and greens aboard Galactica. The dramatic coloring of the Nebula combined with the full force of "All Along the Watchtower" conveys that something pivotal is about to happen.

Figure 38: Apollo in the Ionian Nebula⁷⁰



Indeed, destiny irreversibly collides with "All Along the Watchtower" in the season's final minutes when Starbuck appears. Killed at the end of "Maelstrom" (3.18) three episodes previously, Starbuck's arrival in the Ionian Nebula is nothing short of astonishing. Apollo, who witnessed her death and mourned her loss, finds her alone in a Viper coasting next to him. McCreary's score heightens the mystery, shock, and wonder of Starbuck's appearance. The

⁷⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Crossroads, Part 2."

lyrics of “All Along the Watchtower” abruptly pause and the melody transitions to a simple, wailing electric guitar drone at the instrument’s highest range under the dialogue:

STARBUCK: Hi, Lee.

APOLLO: Kara?

STARBUCK: Don’t freak out, it really is me. It’s going to be okay. (*“All Along the Watchtower” begins again*) I’ve been to Earth. I know where it is and I’m going to take us there.⁷¹

At Starbuck’s admission, which establishes the role of the Ionian Nebula as the religious signpost to Earth, McCreary’s countersubject to “All Along the Watchtower” plays (the original disembodied tune) and the ostinato that occurred underneath the full song begins anew.

The return to the song’s opening in the last seconds of “Crossroads, Part 2” represents echoes of the Sacred Scrolls. As previously explored, the closing lines of the song could also serve as its beginning, with the two riders approaching the Watchtower as the joker and the thief. Furthermore, the cyclical shape of “All Along the Watchtower” lies not only in the lyrics but is embedded within its musical structure as well. The song, which consists of only three chords, begins and ends in C# minor; as a result, the ending provides a natural transition into the opening. The song, like the lyrics, is cyclical. McCreary’s cover in “Crossroads” amplifies the circular pattern of the lyrics: the words “all along the watchtower” repeat after the final phrase of the original song. Similarly, McCreary ends his cover in C# minor with a restatement of the disembodied music that started the piece.

Cyclical narrative structures occur not only in Dylan’s lyrics, but throughout *BSG*. As explored in Chapter 1, *The Scrolls of Pythia* contain the portentous words, “All of this has happened before, and all of this will happen again.”⁷² The Sacred Scrolls detail the history of

⁷¹ Musical annotation added.

⁷² *Battlestar Galactica*, season 2, episode 6, “Home, Part 1,” directed by Sergio Mimia-Gezzan, aired August 19, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 2.

Kobol and linger on the destruction caused by the growth of greed and technology amongst the Thirteen Tribes. As a result, Kobol fell and the Tribes departed. This cycle similarly repeated in the *BSG* miniseries, where the Twelve Colonies fell after the Cylon attack.⁷³ The cyclic nature of the show is essential within the narrative, as the humans slowly realize their battle with the Cylons happened many times before and will probably happen again.

Musical Predestination

Outside of the irregular ending in Season 3, most of *BSG*'s music is offscreen and intradiegetic. The many leitmotifs surveyed in Chapter 2, for example, are only on the soundtrack and foreshadow coming events to viewers, not the characters themselves. The fabric of *BSG*'s music is leitmotifs, which McCreary layered throughout each episode to hint at the growing relationships and impending destinies. Most characters, including Tigh, Apollo, Boomer, and Head Six, have only one leitmotif throughout the series. Baltar and Starbuck, however, receive two motives. Although Starbuck and Baltar are main characters, it seems strange that these are the only two characters with multiple musical depictions. What accounts for the second leitmotifs? The answer lies in the characters' religious evolution: both Starbuck and Baltar undergo drastic spiritual transformations over the course of the series. Indeed, the names of their leitmotifs, Spiritual Baltar and Starbuck's Destiny, depict the spiritual shift each character experiences in Season 4. These changes are particularly relevant as both Starbuck and Baltar have been hailed as saviors with higher destinies.

⁷³ *BSG* explicitly makes this connection in a series of flashbacks found in the series finale that read: "Caprica before the Fall." *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4.5, episode 19, "Daybreak, Part 1," directed by Michael Rymer, aired March 13, 2009, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 4.

Throughout *BSG*, Starbuck consistently remains one of the most spiritual characters. A firm believer in the Twelve Colonies' polytheism, Starbuck often prays during moments of anxiety and mourning. In the miniseries, for example, Starbuck mistakenly believes that Apollo is dead and desperately prays for his soul: "Lords of Kobol, hear my prayer. Take the souls of your sons and daughters lost this day, especially that of Lee Adama, into your hands."⁷⁴ Starbuck's deep spirituality often wreaks havoc with her sense of duty, as when she disobeys orders from Adama and assists Roslin. As previously discussed, the Scrolls of Pythia tell of a Thirteenth Tribe that settled on the mystical Earth, which can only be found by discovering Apollo's arrow. Although Adama and the crew of *BSG* scoffed at Roslin's belief, Starbuck abandoned her post and flew to Caprica to retrieve Apollo's arrow for the president. Subsequently, Roslin and Starbuck together found Athena's tomb on Kobol, which depicted Earth's constellations once combined with Apollo's arrow.⁷⁵ The success of this venture only served to strengthen Starbuck's polytheistic beliefs, to which she held until her death in "Maelstrom."

References to Starbuck's spirituality are brief in the first three seasons of *BSG*, but her ambiguous relationship with Cylon Number Two, Leoben Conoy, alludes to her impending religious future. Starbuck and Leoben first meet in "Flesh and Bone" and the Cylon immediately questions her about her religious beliefs:

LEOBEN: You believe in the gods, don't you? Lords of Kobol and all that?
STARBUCK: Why should I tell you?

⁷⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Miniseries."

⁷⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Home, Parts 1 and 2." This episode features a striking continuity error in *BSG*. Combined, Athena's Tomb and Apollo's Arrow show the constellations of our modern Earth, but Season 4 reveals that the Earth of the Thirteenth Tribe was destroyed in nuclear war. Fans speculated that the constellations shifted and that both Earths did have the same stars, but it is clear that the writers simply did not know the endgame and, as a result, hinted at a future that would not pan out.

LEOBEN: Come on, it's not a trick question...So you pray to Artemis and Aphrodite?... Our faiths are similar but I look to one God, not to many.
STARBUCK: I don't give a damn what you believe.
LEOBEN: To know the face of God is to know madness. I see the universe. I see the patterns, I see the foreshadowing that precedes every moment of every day. It's all there.⁷⁶

Later during the conversation, Leoben clarifies his ominous, foreshadowing statements:

LEOBEN: This is not your path, Starbuck. This is not your destiny...All this has happened before, and all of it will happen again.
STARBUCK: Don't quote scripture. You don't have the right to use those words.
LEOBEN: You kneel before idols and ask for guidance and you can't see that your destiny's already been written...And this time, your role, you have to deliver my soul unto God. Do it for me. It's your destiny, and mine. And I told you I had a surprise for you. Are you ready? You're gonna find Kobol, birthplace of us all. Kobol will lead you to Earth. This is my gift to you, Kara.⁷⁷

Starbuck's polytheistic beliefs and Leoben's monotheism clash in these scenes. Quoting the Scrolls of Pythia, Leoben assures Starbuck that "all this has happened before" and follows the scripture with his impossible knowledge that the Colonial Fleet would find Kobol and Earth.⁷⁸ Leoben's correct assertions lead to many questions: is this Cylon actually a messenger like Head Six? Does the Divine tell Leoben the future or is Leoben a prophet? The episode ends without any answers, leaving Starbuck apprehensive as to her destiny.

The music during the interrogation scenes in "Flesh and Bone" ultimately leads to the leitmotif that McCreary entitled Starbuck's Destiny. Instead of using the Starbuck leitmotif in the episode, McCreary set Starbuck's uncomfortable confrontations with Leoben to oscillating minor thirds played by gamelan and metallic percussion.⁷⁹ The lack of melody serves a dual purpose:

⁷⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Flesh and Bone."

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Like the Cylons leitmotif, the metallic percussion alludes to Leoben's identity as a "Toaster." Starbuck alludes to this in her first meeting with Leoben, stating: "I don't think the gods answer the prayers of toasters." Ibid.

the ominous thirds create an anxious atmosphere while also hinting at the open, unknown nature of Starbuck's and Leoben's future relationship. In later seasons, McCreary transformed these minor thirds into a full leitmotif, which he originally intended to portray the uneasy relationship between Starbuck and Leoben. Nevertheless, the leitmotif better represents Starbuck's future than her shaky relationship with Leoben, as evidenced by its appearances throughout Season 4.

The Starbuck's Destiny leitmotif reaches its full form in the episode containing Starbuck's death, "Maelstrom." Leoben appears in visions to Starbuck, hinting at her impending destiny. Although Starbuck fights against her visions, Starbuck's Destiny accompanies each scene. Composed from the oscillating minor-thirds motif, the short melody is haunting. McCreary used grace notes, trills, and slides to create a sense of anxiety and melodic ambiguity (see Figure 39).⁸⁰ Furthermore, the leitmotif is often played by an erhu, an expressive dual-stringed Chinese instrument that sounds similar to a violin. In "Maelstrom," McCreary portrayed Starbuck's descent into madness and her eventual death by layering the Starbuck and Starbuck's Destiny leitmotifs throughout the episode. During her death scene, however, McCreary relied solely on Starbuck's Destiny, crafting an involved fugue on the leitmotif. Although the viewers believed that Starbuck's death was the end of the character's journey, the music hinted that her destiny was only beginning.⁸¹

⁸⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 3, episode 17, "Maelstrom," directed by Michael Nankin, aired March 4, 2007, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2008), disc 5.

⁸¹ An uproar followed the airing of "Maelstrom" as viewers believed that Starbuck would not return. Reviewer Emily VanDerWerff astutely noted that Starbuck had to return, as her destiny was massively foreshadowed throughout the series, but amusingly ended: "unless the destiny Leoben kept hectoring her about was, indeed, to simply die, in which case, I have a very special destiny, too." Emily VanDerWerff, "Battlestar Galactica Recap: Season 3, Episode 17, 'Maelstrom'," *Slant Magazine* March 5, 2007, <https://www.slantmagazine.com/tv/bsg-mondays-season-3-episode-17-maelstrom/>.

Figure 39: Starbuck's Destiny⁸²



Like Starbuck, Baltar undergoes a dramatic spiritual transformation throughout *BSG*.

Baltar begins as an atheist, but his interactions with Head Six slowly lead the scientist towards monotheism. In “Hand of God” (1.10), for example, Baltar turns to Head Six for advice on where to bomb the Cylons:

BALTAR: I need your advice on this one.

HEAD SIX: I’m flattered, Gaius, but I don’t know the first thing about tylium refineries.

BALTAR: Neither do I. Oh, come on, you must have an inkling where I should tell them to bomb.

HEAD SIX: No, but God does.

BALTAR: Oh, good. I suppose God doesn’t want me to destroy the base, because he’s the Cylon God, right?

HEAD SIX: God doesn’t take sides. He only wants your love. Open your heart to him and he’ll show you the way.⁸³

Frustrated with Head Six, Baltar chooses a spot at random, hoping that none of Galactica will call his bluff. Baltar’s anxiety turns to shock, however, as his random choice turned out to be correct. The episode ends with Head Six convincing the atheist Baltar that perhaps the Divine exists:

HEAD SIX: Have you read the Pythian prophecy, Gaius?... “All of this has happened before. All of this will happen again.”

BALTAR: Everyone knows that verse. What are you getting at?

HEAD SIX: Remember this one? “Led by serpents numbering two and ten.”

BALTAR: The Vipers, they’re the serpents.

⁸² Bear McCreary, “BG4: ‘He That Believeth...’,” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, April 5, 2008, accessed June 29, 2020, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-he-that-believeth/>, used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁸³ *Battlestar Galactica*, “The Hand of God.”

HEAD SIX: There's a later verse, Gaius. You should read it. "Though the outcome favored the few, it led to a confrontation at the home of the gods."⁸⁴

BALTAR: Are you telling me that [the Divine] guided my finger to that target for some arcane scriptural purpose?

HEAD SIX: You are part of [the Divine]'s plan, Gaius.

BALTAR: So [the Divine] wanted me to destroy the Cylon base.

HEAD SIX: You did well. You gave yourself over to him.

BALTAR: Yes, I supposed I did. Yes, there's really no other logical explanation for it. I was

HEAD SIX: Am

BALTAR: I am an instrument of [the Divine].⁸⁵

As Baltar's musing on the existence of the Divine grows stronger, the Baltar leitmotif grows to a climax. Yet Baltar is not yet fully convinced that the Divine exists. As a result of his spiritual wavering, Baltar does not yet receive a new leitmotif.

It is only in Season 4, as Baltar finally changes from skeptic to prophet, that the scientist receives his new Spiritual Baltar leitmotif. As described in Chapter 2, Spiritual Baltar evolves out of the chordal structure of the Baltar leitmotif. McCreary described how the leitmotif depicts Baltar's change from a secular narcissist to a religious prophet:

In my mind, they represent the battling side of his persona: the genuine, spiritual being and the manipulative, selfish bastard. His personalities are not easily separated, and thusly neither are his [leitmotifs]. They are closely related, indeed, his spiritual [leitmotif] *could not exist* without the darker one providing the last two chords.⁸⁶

Indeed, the dark Baltar leitmotif is nearly indistinguishable in Spiritual Baltar as the new leitmotif outlines a mysterious, stepwise melody harmonic progression (see Figure 40). The leitmotif first appeared in "He That Believeth In Me" (4.01), showing Baltar's arrival in a religious harem that believed he was the prophet of the Divine and savior of humanity. As Baltar toured his new living quarters, the Spiritual Baltar leitmotif continuously repeats in a gamelan

⁸⁴ This quote clearly references the Season 1 finale, in which Baltar arrives on Kobol, home of the gods, after being shot down by Cylons.

⁸⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, "The Hand of God."

⁸⁶ McCreary, "BG4: 'He That Believeth...'"

ensemble, giving a chant-like quality to the music. Over the leitmotif, McCreary sets a prayer in Old English chanted by a female voice:

We gadriap in nihtscuan (We gather in shadow,
Neoðan þin gledstede, (Beneath your altar,
þin liçfæst in blode ond liege. (Your image in blood and flame.)
Nu þin gebann, æpreddaþ us (By your command, deliver us)
To þæm anlicum æltæwan gascyninge (Unto the One True God)
Gaius Baltar, ure dryhtweorþ nergend (Gaius Baltar, our divine savior)
Nu ond æfre to alder. (Now and for eternity.)
Swa we gehwilc gehalsiaþ. (So say we all.)⁸⁷

This prayer enhances the transcendent qualities of Spiritual Baltar, showing that some humans are beginning to transition from polytheistic to monotheistic under Baltar’s leadership.

Figure 40: Spiritual Baltar⁸⁸



The Spiritual Baltar leitmotif appears throughout Season 4, but it reaches its pinnacle as underscoring to several important religious moments in “Escape Velocity” (4.04).⁸⁹ In this episode, Baltar fully accepts his position as a monotheistic prophet following a raid by The Sons of Ares, a religious sect terrorizing Baltar and disciples of the Divine. Head Six prompts Baltar to retaliate in feisty rhetoric, which McCreary underscored with arpeggiated rhythms in the Spiritual Baltar harmonic progressions. As Baltar and his followers rally to counterattack Galactica’s Temple, taiko drums mix with the chant-like mantra of the Spiritual Baltar leitmotif

⁸⁷ Lyrics by Bear McCreary, translation in Anglo-Saxon by Alison Walker. McCreary, “BG4: He That Believeth...”

⁸⁸ Ibid., used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁸⁹ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4, episode 4, “Escape Velocity,” directed by Edward James Olmos, aired April 25, 2008, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 2.

and create an aggressive version of the leitmotif. Nevertheless, Baltar's attempts to stand up against the Sons of Ares's violence ultimately bring more suffering as Roslin bans all religious gatherings. Beaten and bloodied by soldiers for disobeying Roslin's orders, Baltar reaches an epiphany:

I'm not a priest. I've never even been a particularly good man. I have, in fact, been a profoundly selfish man. But that doesn't matter, you see. Something in the universe loves me. Something in the universe loves the entity that is me. I will choose to call this something "God." A singular spark that dwells in the soul of every living being. If you look inside yourself, you will find this spark too. You will. But you have to look deep.⁹⁰

As Baltar's speech nears its climax, the Spiritual Baltar leitmotif continually repeats. The music grows louder and louder, accompanying Baltar's effusive rhetoric, as new contrapuntal lines entwine the simple melody. The instrumentation further enhances Baltar's triumphant moment of realization, as the gamelan ensemble merges with strings and percussion to create a rich, full timbre. Baltar finally accepts that he plays a role in the Divine's plan, and the non-diegetic music celebrates his epiphany.

Ben Winters attacked the very notion of non-diegetic music in a controversial 2010 article. His analysis of "intradiegetic" music is particularly relevant to this chapter, as he argued that all music in a film is connected to and possibly influences characters.⁹¹ Winters referred to this as the "Indiana Jones problem," noting that Indiana Jones cannot be removed from his music.⁹² In many ways, he argued, the music emanates from Jones and has the potential to shape him. Winters further developed this claim through his discussion of the "Force" theme in *Star Wars* by suggesting that the music shapes Luke Skywalker's actions and flows all around him,

⁹⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Escape Velocity."

⁹¹ Ben Winters, "The Non-Diegetic Fallacy: Film, Music, and Narrative Space" *Music & Letters* 91, no. 2 (2010): 224–44.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 224.

much like the Force itself.⁹³ Finally, Winters breaks intradiegetic music into two categories: fictional and extra-fictional. Extra-fictional music, such as an overture or intermission music, exists outside of the fictional story itself while fictional music encompasses all other types of music. Winters ultimately concluded that non-diegetic music does not exist; instead, film creates its own reality and the music is an intrinsic part of that reality, as inseparable from the filmic reality as the cinematography, editing, or lighting choice.⁹⁴

Understandably, Winters's article resulted in a flurry of responses, many of which disagreed with his conclusions. Tobias Pontara, in particular, took issues with Winters's claim that film provides a new reality where all music can exist diegetically.⁹⁵ Using *Saving Private Ryan* as an example, Pontara cited the reality principle, showing how some films are clearly meant to be a representation of history. Science fiction, however, does not fit under this description. Still, Pontara argued that the principle of minimal departure, in which spectators project their own worlds onto the worlds in film, also disputes intradiegetic music. Our reality does not hear music occurring around us, Pontara insisted, thus the audience never assumes that happens onscreen unless specifically told.

Baltar's music throughout "Escape Velocity" may serve as an ideal case study on Winters's theory on intradiegetic music. In his systematic dismissal of the term non-diegetic, Winters astutely wondered, "Might we better understand such music not as a narrating voice but as the product of narration, belonging to the same narrative space as the characters and their

⁹³ Winters, "The Non-Diegetic Fallacy," 233.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁹⁵ Tobias Pontara, "Interpretation and Underscoring: Modest Constructivism and the Issue of Nondiegetic versus Intradiegetic Music in Film," *Music and the Moving Image* 9, no. 2 (2016), 29–57.

world?⁹⁶ Although the characters in film—and, by extension, television—may not be able to hear the music surrounding them, Winters argued, it plays a fundamental role in shaping their actions.⁹⁷ The intradiegetic music in “Escape Velocity” thus aids Baltar’s transformation from doubting atheist to an emphatic religious leader. The speech begins with melody; instead, the chordal progression from the Spiritual Baltar leitmotif subtly plays underneath the character’s voice. The music begins seconds before Baltar changes from describing himself to describing the Divine: “I have, in fact, [*music begins*] been a profoundly selfish man. But that doesn’t matter, you see. Something in the universe loves me.”⁹⁸ If the music was simply amplifying Baltar’s speech, one would expect the chords from Spiritual Baltar to begin as he starts his second sentence. Instead, the music seems to prompt Baltar to discuss the Divine and his spirituality. The entrance of the leitmotif’s melody similarly emboldens Baltar: the scientist’s voice grows stronger, as if encouraged by the entrance of the leitmotif, and he begins to discuss the importance of loving yourself as the Divine loves you.⁹⁹

In the same way, the Starbuck and Starbuck’s Destiny leitmotifs can be heard as influencing her religious evolution. As the plot motivates the musical score, Starbuck’s transformation requires two separate leitmotifs. Throughout Seasons 1 and 2, the pilot’s only leitmotif is the heroic Starbuck that mimics her daring missions and abrasive personality. Chapter 2, which explored the instrumentation and timbre of the Starbuck leitmotif, noted the change in instrumentation from melancholy duduk to triumphant trumpet as Starbuck escaped an abandoned planet. Indeed, this change depicts the narrative to the audience, but the changing

⁹⁶ Winters, *The Non-Diegetic Fallacy*, 228.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁹⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Escape Velocity.”

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

timbre of this intradiegetic music could also have affected Starbuck herself and encouraged her to keep trying.

Similarly, Starbuck's Destiny forces the Viper pilot to confront her prophesied future. The oscillating minor thirds of "Flesh and Bone," which are not yet a formed melody, evolve into a full leitmotif as Starbuck and Leoben continue to interact in later seasons. Leoben is clearly fascinated by Starbuck, perhaps prompted by the ominous thirds in the intradiegetic music, but his obsession is primarily with her destiny.¹⁰⁰ The leitmotif seems almost as connected to Leoben as it is with Starbuck, as both are present during the majority of its occurrences.¹⁰¹ The Starbuck and Starbuck's Destiny leitmotifs also show the character's dual nature, particularly in "The Road Less Traveled" (4.05). In this episode, Starbuck and Leoben discuss her childhood and Leoben once more attempts to convince her that she has a great destiny.¹⁰² As Leoben implores Starbuck to believe in herself, Starbuck's Destiny and Starbuck

¹⁰⁰ The one major exception to Leoben's obsession occurs at the opening on Season 3 on New Caprica. While most humans are allowed to stay together under the leadership of the Cylons, Leoben takes Starbuck captive and psychologically tortures her. The two go through an uncomfortable cycle: Leoben attempts to win Starbuck's affections and she brutally kills him, only for the Cylon to return in a new body and start the process anew. Furthermore, Leoben claims that Starbuck's eggs harvested in Season 2's "The Farm" led to a half-human, half-Cylon child, Kacey, that he fathered. This is revealed to be untrue in "Exodus, Part 2" (3.04) when Kacey reunites with her human mother on Galactica. All of Starbuck's future interactions with Leoben, however, ignore this multi-episode arc and focus on her destiny. *Battlestar Galactica*, season 3, episodes 1 and 2, "Occupation" and "Precipice," directed by Sergio Mimica-Gezzan, aired October 6, 2006 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2008), disc 1. *Battlestar Galactica*, season 3, episodes 3 and 4, "Exodus, Parts 1 and 2," directed by Félix Enriquez Alcalá, aired October 13 and 20, 2006 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2008), disc 1.

¹⁰¹ Perhaps why McCreary initially entitled the leitmotif "Starbuck and Leoben." McCreary, "BG3: 'Maelstrom'," *Bear McCreary Official Site*, March 7, 2007, accessed July 13, 2019, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg3-maelstrom/>.

¹⁰² *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4, episode 5, "The Road Less Traveled," directed by Michael Rymer, aired May 2, 2008, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 3.

play in counterpoint. The duduk and erhu slowly mix together and Starbuck finally accepts the inevitability of her future. These intradiegetic leitmotifs seemingly influence the moment: Starbuck and Starbuck's Destiny unite to craft the character's moment of reckoning.

Unlike Baltar's and Starbuck's music, the religious diegesis of "All Along the Watchtower" continues to escape categorization. As previously noted, McCreary's Phrygian disembodied music served as the countermelody for Dylan's original "All Along the Watchtower" melody. The music consistently returns, however, as the Final Five leitmotif. Maintaining its religious affiliations, the Final Five leitmotif appears alongside Tyrol, Anders, Tigh, Foster, and eventually Ellen as they explore their identities and discuss philosophical and religious matters. The leitmotif accompanies Anders, for example, as he discusses the meaning of faith with Leoben in "The Road Less Travelled." Yet Final Five does not just serve as a musical representation of these Cylons, but hints at their predestined roles as well. This becomes apparent in "Faith" (4.06) when the leitmotif subtly plays behind Starbuck as she solves a spiritual puzzle and uncovers the location of Earth.¹⁰³ Here, the Final Five leitmotif is intradiegetic, serving dual purposes as a foreshadowing hint for viewers and a clue for Starbuck. And yet, the final episodes of Season 4 throw the diegesis of Final Five into disarray as in transitions in and out of characters consciousness in "Someone to Watch Over Me" (4.17).¹⁰⁴ Winters asserted that all fictional music is intradiegetic but keeps the label diegetic in order to provide clarity between the intradiegetic music that characters can and cannot hear. Following his classification, we may say that the Final Five leitmotif evolves from diegetic music in

¹⁰³ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Faith."

¹⁰⁴ The changing significance the "Final Five" leitmotif's religious diegesis is too immense to explore in this chapter but will be covered in detail in Chapter 4.

“Crossroads” (as it combines with “All Along the Watchtower”) to intradiegetic in Season 4, and finally moves back to diegetic in the series finale.

Finding Earth

The offscreen, intradiegetic leitmotifs of Final Five, Spiritual Baltar, and Starbuck’s Destiny help align theology and music in the soundtrack of *BSG*, but McCreary’s *Diaspora Oratorio* transcendently elevates the connections. *Diaspora Oratorio* accompanies the final five minutes of “Revelations” (4.10), the episode in which the Colonial Fleet finally arrives at Earth.¹⁰⁵ This moment of victory reflects four seasons of searching that began when Adama proclaimed he would find Earth at the end of the miniseries. Adama made this promise out of desperation, hoping to motivate his crew in the wake of the human genocide that began *BSG*. And yet, it was Roslin rather than Adama that ultimately guided the Colonial Fleet out of the vast wilderness of space and to the promised land. Roslin’s spiritual belief and unwavering trust in the Scrolls of Pythia led to Kobol, Apollo’s arrow, Athena’s tomb, the Eye of Jupiter, and ultimately Earth.

The music in this climactic scene draws directly from historical religious music. McCreary entitled his composition *Diaspora Oratorio*, a reference to a distinctively religious genre. Featuring a choir singing a Latin text, this episode was the first to introduce a full chorus. McCreary eschewed *BSG*’s typical soundscape in this scene, focusing on full, rich orchestral and choral timbres instead of sparse Asian and Middle Eastern instrumentation. *Diaspora Oratorio*

¹⁰⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4, episode 10, “Revelations,” directed by Michael Rymer, aired June 13, 2008, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 4.

does not fully abandon the *BSG* sound, however, as Japanese shime and nagado daikos provide an underlying rhythmic pulse with the Middle Eastern dumbek.

McCreary composed two short themes as the building blocks of *Diaspora Oratorio*. The A theme, a mere two measures long, first appears in a simple, chorale arrangement played by the strings (see Figure 41). Choir and brass immediately enter after the A theme finishes, announcing the longer and more melodically complex B theme (see Figure 42). Although introduced by typical oratorio instrumentation like brass and strings, it is perhaps most noteworthy that McCreary uses major scales for the entirety of *Diaspora Oratorio*. Unlike the many leitmotifs that use the Phrygian scale or other exoticized tonalities, this theme uses a tonal idiom that would be immediately familiar to the audience. As Papanikolaou noted, however, Western tonalities and instrumentation now actually sound “exotic” after four seasons of a different sound.¹⁰⁶

Figure 41: *Diaspora Oratorio* A Theme¹⁰⁷



Figure 42: *Diaspora Oratorio* B Theme¹⁰⁸



The Latin text in *Diaspora Oratorio* reinforces the intradiegetic influence of the music. At first the text seems descriptive, noting only the long journey that the Colonial Fleet had endured. As the music reaches its climax, however, the text turns spiritual:

¹⁰⁶ Papanikolaou, “Of Duduks and Dylan,” 227.

¹⁰⁷ Bear McCreary, “BG4: ‘Revelations’,” *Bear McCreary Official*, June 14, 2008, accessed June 17, 2020, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-revelations>, used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

Finis itineris Viatores fatigati Venientes ad litus longe distantem Collinae virentes Superstant nebulam tristem Dies surgit Unda matutina	Journey's end. Weary travelers approach a distant shore. Verdant peaks pierce the melancholy haze. The sky breaks like a wave.
Omnes passi sumus multa Omnes superviximus Venimus Terram	We have all suffered, we have all survived. We have arrived at Earth.
Fratres sororesque Inimici et amici Osculamini Domum venimus	Brothers and sisters, enemies and friend, embrace for we have come home.
Iam plango Non mortuos Sed implacatos	Yet I weep, not for the fallen, but for the unforgiven.
Collinae virentes pos excipient Vento sequente Caeli aperient Approquingantibus	Green hills await with wind at our back. The heavens part as we approach. ¹⁰⁹

In a synchronous moment, Adama states “We have arrived at Earth,” while the choir sings the same phrase. The camera then pans throughout the Fleet, showing mass celebrations as the choir jubilantly declares that they have come home. Although we glimpse of all the main characters, perhaps most striking lingering shot of Baltar and the religious cult raising their hands in praise. This moment is stunning, as both the polytheistic and monotheistic believers rejoice and trust that their deity or deities have led them to Earth.

Moreover, the last two strophes showcase the prophetic fulfillment of the Fleet’s arrival on Earth. Not only do the humans rejoice, but they also weep for the fallen and unforgiven. This

¹⁰⁹ McCreary, “BG4: Revelations,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

phrase is particularly striking since the camera cuts to a dejected Tigh, recently outed as a Cylon, as he sits alone in his quarters. The camera then moves around to other characters with a prophesized “destiny”—including Starbuck, Anders, Tyrol, Athena, and Hera—before returning to the Adamas and Roslin in the CIC. Finally, an establishing shot shows the Fleet approaching Earth as the choir sings their last, triumphant phrase: “The heavens part as we approach.”¹¹⁰

Diaspora Oratorio is the crowning example of offscreen, intradiegetic religious music in *BSG*. Although McCreary continues to layer the leitmotifs throughout the rest of the season, this moment is the pinnacle of intradiegetic spirituality. And yet, the journey is not over as this Earth proves uninhabitable. The Divine’s plan will bring them to the final Earth and expose the significance of the Final Five, Spiritual Baltar, and Starbuck’s Destiny leitmotifs. The fight between monotheism and polytheism dominates *BSG*, but the Divine seemingly wins out on Earth.

Throughout the series, Roslin and the other devout believers relied on *The Scrolls of Pythia*, drawing on the sacred lore in their attempts to find the Earth of the Thirteenth Tribe. When the Fleet finally arrives, however, they find the planet as a nuclear wasteland. The hopes of humanity are crushed by this discovery, which leads Dualla to commit suicide and Roslin to burn her copy of the Sacred Scrolls. The Final Five, however, come to a monumental realization: the Thirteenth Tribe that inhabited Earth were Cylons. Their memories come flooding back and Tigh remembers that Ellen, his dead wife, was the fifth Cylon in their ranks. These discoveries throw a wrinkle into the established theology in *BSG*. The humans’ belief in the Lords of Kobol and the Sacred Scrolls is seemingly justified, since many of the prophecies have come to pass. Furthermore, the Thirteenth Tribe did exist and artifacts like the Arrow of Apollo, the Tomb of

¹¹⁰ McCreary, “BG4: Revelations.”

Athena, and the Eye of Jupiter have guided the Colonial Fleet to Earth. Yet the humans are utterly lost after their arrival. Roslin's unwavering beliefs led the Fleet to Earth, but they cannot reside there and must continue their search for a habitable planet. This crushing discovery prompts difficult questions. What is the purpose of the Lords of Kobol and the Sacred Scrolls? Do the Lords of Kobol hear their prayers, as Starbuck often asks, or are they a legend from Kobol that are long dead? What should the humans do now?

It is here on Earth, as humanity is at its breaking point and falling into despair, that the future prophesied by Head Six begins to take shape. Over the course of the series, Head Six repeatedly told Baltar that the Divine has a plan, but it is not until "Faith" that the audience learns its crucial points. Starbuck, searching for Earth, listens to unintelligible babble from a Cylon hybrid, that is, an early Cylon attempt at a humanoid model. As Starbuck listens, the hybrid suddenly becomes lucid: "Thus will it come to pass. The dying leader will know the truth of the Opera House. The missing Three will give you the Five who have come from the home of the Thirteenth. You are the harbinger of death, Kara Thrace. You will lead them all to their end."¹¹¹ Although Starbuck does not understand this prophecy, much of it is clear to the audience. The dying leader, Roslin, will understand her Opera House visions that come, unbeknownst to her, from the Divine. The missing Three is D'Anna, the Model Number Three who was boxed by Number One, John Cavill, for seeing the faces of the Final Five. Furthermore, as Anders, Foster, Tyrol, and Tigh discover on Earth, they come from the "home of the Thirteenth" tribe. The hybrid's prediction on Starbuck's role becomes clearer on Earth as well, as Starbuck and Leoben discover human remnants that possess her dog tags (see Figure 43). The two stare at the corpse in horror, slowly realizing that the human Starbuck died crashing to Earth

¹¹¹ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Faith."

and that the living Starbuck must be something else entirely. She wonders if she is a Cylon, but there is another possibility: she is a Messenger like Head Six.

Figure 43: Starbuck and Leoben discover her corpse¹¹²



As previously explored, the Messengers play a crucial role in distilling the Divine’s intentions. Head Six is the most recognizable Messenger, guiding Baltar from the *BSG* miniseries onwards. Caprica Six, too, receives a Messenger in the form of Baltar, who helps her eventually reunite with the scientist. Head Six and Head Baltar are the obvious Messengers, but a Head Leoben also seemingly appears to Starbuck in her death episode and guides her to her “destiny.” If Head Leoben’s purpose was to bring the human Starbuck to her death, what is the purpose of the Messenger Starbuck? As first glance, it seems that Messenger Starbuck’s role is to bring the humans and “good” Cylons to the Earth of the Thirteenth Tribe, which she fulfills at

¹¹² *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4.5, episode 11, “Sometimes a Great Notion,” directed by Michael Nankin, aired January 16, 2009, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 1.

the end of “Revelations.”¹¹³ But the hybrid’s prophecy that Starbuck is the “harbinger of death” and will “lead them all to their end” remains unfulfilled. Starbuck still has a destiny to fulfill, which means her existence does not end at the Thirteenth Tribe’s Earth. Instead, the Divine’s plan will bring them to the final Earth and reveal the significance of the Final Five, Spiritual Baltar, and Starbuck’s Destiny leitmotifs.

As this chapter has shown, religious music permeates *BSG*. The religious leitmotifs, which stand apart from other character leitmotifs, mark the predetermined destinies of Starbuck, Baltar, and the Final Five. These offscreen, intradiegetic melodies show how the characters’ music adapted and changed over the course of the series as their spirituality transformed. Yet the Final Five leitmotif provides a bridge between the religious intradiegetic music and *BSG*’s religious diegetic music. The leitmotif serves many purposes in the series: a disembodied melody that haunts Tyrol, Foster, Tigh, and Anders; an interchangeable leitmotif with the apocryphal “All Along the Watchtower”; onscreen and offscreen music that propels action forwards; and an offscreen, intradiegetic music that serves to foreshadow the destiny of the Final Five Cylons. The ever-changing diegesis of Final Five and “All Along the Watchtower” serve a crucial purpose in diegetically guiding the humans and Cylons to Earth while hinting at the viewers through intradiegetic music that the journey does not end there.

Nevertheless, the religious music in *BSG* has not yet reached consummation. The final episodes of the series will further transform the use of diegetic music within the plot, pioneering a new level of interaction between soundtrack and narrative. Together, diegetic and intradiegetic

¹¹³ The Cylons fought a Civil War and split into two factions. The “good” Cylons include Model Numbers Two (Leoben), Three (D’Anna), Six, and Eight (Sharon). The “bad” Cylons are then Models One (Cavil), Four (Doral), Five (Simon), and Boomer, who defected from the rest of the Eights.

music unite at the end of Season 4 to bring each character to their destiny and fulfill the plan of the Divine.

Chapter 4: Saving *la Mestiza*

What is the Divine's plan? Throughout *BSG*, Head Six proclaims that Baltar plays a crucial role in the plan and Leoben consistently speaks of Starbuck's great destiny. Nevertheless, the Divine's objectives are never specifically unveiled. The writers of *BSG* leave the viewers to unpack their clues and discover the hidden meanings. After the series finale, however, the audience remained baffled. Outrage over the ending filled social media as frustrated fans debated who Starbuck was, the purpose of the Opera House, and whether the Lords of Kobol are gods. AV Clubs's Chris Dahlen described himself as "gobsmacked" and argued that *BSG* never had a plan at all, sarcastically musing, "as for the show's other mysteries – forget about 'em."¹ *Slant Magazine*'s Emily VanDerWerff described the finale as "audacious" and "deeply polarizing" but concluded that she found the episode fulfilling.² In an EW ten-year retrospective of *BSG*'s finale, Darren Franich summarizes the fan reactions over the past decade, describing the series as "insane" and aptly summarizing, "you can only really have complicated opinions."³ Indeed, the flurry of response put pressure on the producers, suggesting that they owed their fans some real answers.

In attempts to alleviate backlash and answer some of these questions, a film entitled *BSG: The Plan* premiered in October 2009 following the series finale that told the early seasons from a Cylon point of view. In *The Plan*, two Number Ones discuss the genocide of the Twelve

¹ Dahlen, "Battlestar Galactica: 'Daybreak (pt. 2)'."

² Emily VanDerWerff, "Battlestar Galactica Recap, Season 4, Episode 20, 'Daybreak, Part 2'," *Slant Magazine*, March 21, 2009, <https://www.slantmagazine.com/tv/bsg-saturdays-season-4-ep-20-daybreak-part-2/>.

³ Darren Franich, "The *Battlestar Galactica* finale is 10 years old, and this one part is unforgettable," *EW*, March 20, 2019, <https://ew.com/tv-reviews/2019/03/20/battlestar-galactica-finale-tenth-anniversary/>.

Colonies and the Cylons failure to eradicate humanity. The Cavils posit that there is no God and Cylons are inherently better than humans, but the actions of the other Cylon models are contrary to the Number Ones' convictions.⁴ The Cylon Leoben, for example, implores Cavil to understand his obsession with Starbuck, pleading: "I'm starting to understand why God loved humankind before we changed the plan."⁵ This brief aside in a supplemental film transforms the message of the main series. The title cards throughout the first two seasons of *BSG* espoused that "they have a plan" and Head Six's musing on the Divine's objectives seemingly fit this trajectory.⁶ As *The Plan* announces, however, the Cylons' intentions are dramatically different from that of the Divine's plan. Indeed, the Divine's intentions are frustratingly vague. Head Six serves as the primary Messenger in *BSG* and regularly hints at the plan, but she never directly relates it to Baltar. Head Baltar similarly serves as a mentor to Caprica Six and conceals her destiny. It is only in the series finale that the Divine's plan becomes clear. The hidden clues and baffling phrases repeated throughout *BSG* unite over the last five episodes of the series to show the Divine's intention for humans and Cylons to live in harmony.

It is clear from *The Scrolls of Pythia* that the unification of human and Cylon has been attempted before but has not yet come to pass. As described in Season 1, Kobol served as the

⁴ Throughout *The Plan*, Cavil attempts to sabotage Galactica and eradicate humanity. He instructs Leoben to infiltrate their technology, but Leoben quickly becomes distracted by Starbuck and his belief in her great destiny. Similarly, a Number Six initially discredits Baltar but undoes her actions after forming an attachment. Perhaps most importantly, Cavil activates Boomer, the sleeper Eight onboard Galactica, and instructs her to shoot Adama. Boomer fights back, however, by shooting Adama in the chest rather than through his head. This act insures Adama's survival while simultaneously revealing her true Cylon nature and removing her from Cavil's control.

⁵ *Battlestar Galactica: The Plan*, directed by Edward James Olmos, aired January 10, 2010 on Sci-Fi, accessed October 15, 2020, <https://www.peacocktv.com/watch/asset/movies/sci-fi-and-fantasy/battlestar-galactica-the-plan/226191a0-261b-3355-8601-748fd59a5387>.

⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, "33."

ancestral home of humanity as well as the dwelling place of the Lords of Kobol.⁷ The Twelve Tribes lived together in harmony and created organic machines as a Thirteenth Tribe – the Cylons. The Thirteenth Tribe departed after a war, however, and resettled on Earth.⁸ The humans left Kobol soon thereafter for unknown reasons, although “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 1” suggests that a war between monotheistic and polytheistic factions prompted their exodus.⁹ Following this ancient history, the humans and Cylons continued to battle. The Twelve Colonies created Cylons again, unaware of the origins of the Thirteenth Tribe, leading to the First Cylon War. This re-imagined *BSG* then begins with the start of the Second Cylon War as the humanoid Cylons lead an attack on the Twelve Colonies. As *The Scrolls of Pythia* ominously predict, “all of this has happened before and all of this will happen again.”¹⁰ The Divine seeks to unite humans and Cylons in peace, but their seemingly violent natures continue to derail this objective.

As a result, the Divine seems to base His plan on one key person: Hera. The child of Athena (a Cylon) and Helo (a human), Hera represents the unification of the warring factions. Furthermore, many of the main characters’ narrative arcs revolves around saving Hera. The Messengers, for example, guide Baltar and Caprica Six to Hera’s aid. The Opera House visions explored in Chapter 1 also feature Hera and depict how Baltar, Caprica Six, Athena, and Roslin must unite to bring the cyborg child into the Opera House. Furthermore, the great destiny prophesied for Starbuck directly relates to saving Hera, as do the paths of the Final Five. Hera has very few lines in *BSG*, but her destiny is arguably the most important of all the characters on the show.

⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Parts 1 and 2.”

⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Sometimes a Great Notion.”

⁹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 1.”

¹⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Flesh and Bone.”

The concept of human hybrid is not unique to the science fiction genre but has provided a utopian vision throughout feminist writings as well. In 1984, feminist scholar Donna Haraway published her shocking and defiant “A Cyborg Manifesto.”¹¹ In this essay, Haraway used the metaphor of the cyborg to argue against gender roles, essentialism, and racial divisions. In her introduction, Haraway laid out her vision of the cyborg:

Contemporary science fiction is full of cyborgs – creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted. Modern medicine is also full of cyborgs, of couplings between organism and machine, each conceived as coded devices, in an intimacy and with a power that was not generated in the history of sexuality. Cyborg ‘sex’ restores some of the lovely replication baroque of ferns and invertebrates (such nice organic prophylactic against heterosexist). Cyborg replication is uncoupled from organic reproduction... I am making an argument for the cyborg as a fiction mapping our social and bodily reality and as an imaginative resource suggesting some very fruitful couplings.¹²

Haraway went on to argue that the cyborg eliminates old dichotomies – human and animal, organism and machine, body and mind.¹³ Haraway concluded that humans are already cyborgs, noting the fusion of organism and machine in our culture.¹⁴

Several correlations exist between Haraway’s cyborg and Hera. Half human, half Cylon, the child matches the dichotomy of organism and machine. Unlike Haraway’s cyborg, however, Hera is gendered and clearly the product of sexual reproduction. Chris Dzialo argued that Hera is the “good cyborg” from Haraway’s manifesto, noting that she “will allow us to reach our full potential.”¹⁵ Pointing to the episode “Epiphanies” (2.13), in which Baltar uses Hera’s blood to

¹¹ Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs,” *Socialist Review* 80 (Mar.-Apr., 1985): 65–107.

¹² Donna Haraway, *Manifestly Haraway* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴ Haraway wrote “A Cyborg Manifesto” in 1984, but we need not look far to find her theories in our modern world. The smartphone, for example, which is rarely separated from its owner. *Ibid.*, 34–37.

¹⁵ Chris Dzialo, “When Balance Goes Bad: How *Battlestar Galactica* Says Everything and Nothing,” in *Cylons in America*, 175.

send Roslin into cancer remission, Dzialo asserted that Hera “has the power to change everything.”¹⁶ Matthew Gumpert and Tama Leaver, however, contended that all Cylons fit Haraway’s concept of a cyborg.¹⁷ Leaver pointed to the Cylon Leoben, who philosophizes and recites proverbs at Starbuck, as representative of the “blurred and porous” boundaries between human and machine.¹⁸ Gumpert, however, extends Haraway’s definition far more liberally: “For the Cylons of *BSG*...are Haraway’s cyborgs: hybrid beings, both human and machine, and therefore neither human nor machine, whose very ontological indeterminacy represents a challenge to the old essentialist notion of identity.”¹⁹ The Cylons are machines, and yet humanoid models exist that make them both “human and machine.”²⁰ The theory is particularly persuasive when considering that the “plumbing,” as the Doctor on *Galactica* refers to Athena’s reproductive organs, remain human and outdated.²¹ Yet if all of the Cylon humanoid models are cyborgs, then what is Hera?

The answer lies in extended cyborg theories. In 1987, Gloria Anzaldúa responded to Haraway’s “A Cyborg Manifesto” with her book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* in which she discussed Mexican philosopher Jose Vasconcelos’s idea of a cosmic race.²² Vasconcelos argued that the cosmic race embodies the four major human races. This mixture of races,

¹⁶ Dzialo, “When Balance Goes Bad,” 175. *Battlestar Galactica*, season 2.5, episode 13, “Epiphanies,” directed by Rod Hardy, aired January 20, 2006 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2006), disc 1.

¹⁷ Tama Leaver, “‘Humanity’s Children’: Constructing and Confronting the Cylons,” in *Cylons in America*, 131–142. Matthew Gumpert, “Hybridity’s End,” in *Cylons in America*, 143–155.

¹⁸ Leaver, “‘Humanity’s Children,’” 134.

¹⁹ Gumpert, “Hybridity’s End,” 146–147.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ While Athena is in labor, Cottle states: “I find it absolutely amazing you people went to all the trouble to appear human and didn’t upgrade the plumbing.” *Battlestar Galactica*, “Downloaded.”

²² Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*. José Vasconcelos, *La Raza Cósmica: Misión de la Raza Ibero-Americana* (México: Anuilar S.A. de Ediciones, 1961).

Anzaldúa argued, "rather than resulting in an inferior being, provides hybrid progeny, a mutable, more malleable species with a rich gene pool."²³ Anzaldúa expanded on Vascelos's concept throughout *Borderlands*, suggesting that "*la mestiza* is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another."²⁴ The existence of *la mestiza* provides humanity with a chance to react to the divisions throughout the world, including those of race, gender, and religion. In fact, *la mestiza* provides resistance to binary opposition, as she creates a new consciousness by uniting cultures. Anzaldúa concludes that *la mestiza* is "a product of cross breeding, designed for preservation under a variety of conditions."²⁵ In Anzaldúa's utopian future, *la mestiza*'s hybridity is hope for a new world free of binary oppositions.

Many parallels exist between Hera and *la mestiza*. Like Haraway's cyborg, both Hera and *la mestiza* defy binary oppositions. The fruit of love between a human and Cylon, Hera is the only naturally born hybrid in *BSG*. Hera also bridges many cultures. Like *la mestiza*, Hera's hybridity consolidates races into her "cosmic race."²⁶ Although race is not supposed to matter within science fiction, we can categorize Hera as a mixed-race child. The actress playing Number Eight, Grace Park, is a Canadian actress of Korean descent. Tahmeh Penikett, who plays Helo, is also a Canadian, but a first-generation citizen from the White River First Nation from the Yukon Territory. Their ethnic contrast on-screen is striking, for though Penikett is of Indigenous descent, his complexion passes as Caucasian, while Park is considered an Asian actress. Throughout the series, Hera is played by three child actors—Lily Duong-Walton, Alexandra Thomas, and Iliana Gomez-Martinez—who also display the same mixture of ethnic

²³ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 99.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

background. Hera truly represents Vascelos and Anzaldúa's "hybrid progeny" that unites multiple races.²⁷

Hera also bridges religions and cultures. Although born on board Galactica, her kidnapping at the opening of Season 3 leads Hera to spend part of her childhood on a Cylon Baseship. As a result, the child experiences two drastically different ways of life. As explored in Chapter 3, the religious divergences between human and machine also play a major role in differentiating their respective societies. Hera not only learns monotheism and polytheism, but both faiths save her. Roslin initially wants Athena's fetus aborted but changes her mind after experiencing spiritual visions she believed were sent from the Lords of Kobol.²⁸ Furthermore, the Divine predestines characters to save Hera, as we will explore in greater detail.

This chapter will argue that the Divine's plan revolves around Hera's future as *la mestiza* and that music plays an essential role in her rescue. The analysis will focus on the final episodes of *BSG*, taking in larger scene units. I will continue to draw on Winters's theory of intradiegetic music, particularly in relation to the Spiritual Baltar and Starbuck's Destiny leitmotifs. Ultimately, this chapter will argue that the entire series knots together in the figure of Hera and unifies identity and destiny through diegetic and intradiegetic music.

Conceiving *la Mestiza*

The Divine creates a potentially utopian world through the half human, half Cylon child, Hera. The Cylons begin the series believing themselves superior to the humans, and consequently destroy the Twelve Colonies and hunt the human remnant throughout the universe.

²⁷ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 99.

²⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Epiphanies." *Battlestar Galactica*, "Downloaded."

Nevertheless, the Cylons believe themselves to have a higher purpose that requires humanity: “Procreation, it’s one of God’s commandments. Be fruitful. We can’t fulfill it. We tried.”²⁹ Since all Cylon attempts at pregnancy failed, the machines attempt to use human women as incubators. In “The Farm,” for example, Starbuck is captured by the Cylons and harvested for her eggs.³⁰ The Number Five model, Simon, takes on the role as doctor, a problematic assignment due to the actor’s race that this dissertation discussed in Chapter 2. Starbuck is able to escape, but soon finds herself in a room surrounded by human women hooked up to machines. It becomes clear that the Cylons are kidnapping women who managed to survive on Caprica and attempting to procreate, but they have yet to be successful. In an act of mercy, Starbuck unplugs the machines keeping these women alive to release them from this humiliating violation.³¹

Most of *BSG* follows the human’s journey through space, but Helo’s narrative arc in Season 1 depicts the Cylons’ attempts at reproduction. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Helo remains stranded on Caprica after the miniseries and is desperately trying to find a ship and make his way back to Galactica. Helo does not yet know that the Cylons have humanoid models, so when approached by the Number Eight, he believes that a human Boomer returned for him. This model is not Boomer, however, but Athena. Together the two run from Centurions, hiding out in abandoned houses and hunting down medical supplies to protect them from radiation.³² Initially it remains unclear as to why Athena impersonates Boomer and helps Helo escape from the Cylons. In Season 2, however, Athena confides in Starbuck:

²⁹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “The Farm.”

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Of course, Athena does not need anti-radiation medication, as she is a Cylon. Since she is pretending to be human, however, she goes mimics the symptoms and helps discover a fallout shelter to protect Helo. Season 1, Episode 4, “Act of Contrition,” directed by Rod Hardy, aired January 28, 2005 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Home Studios Entertainment, 2005), disc 2.

STARBUCK: So farms, that's great. What were they gonna do? Knock me up with some Cylon kid?

ATHENA: They were gonna try to. We haven't been successful so far.

ANDERS: Supposedly they can't reproduce. You know, biologically. So they have been trying every which way to produce offspring.

STARBUCK: Why?

ATHENA: Procreation. It's one of God's commandments. Be fruitful. We can't fulfill it, we tried. So we decided to –

STARBUCK: To rape human women?

ATHENA: No, if you agreed to bear a child, it'd be voluntary. Maybe even set you up with someone you like.

STARBUCK: Like you two kids?

ATHENA: We're different.

STARBUCK: What the frak is that supposed to mean?

HELO: They have this theory that maybe the one thing they were missing was love. So Sharon and I, we were set up to –

STARBUCK: To fall in love?³³

This striking admission shows the Cylons' reproductive strategy. Unable to procreate alone, the Cylons need the assistance of humans whom they had just massacred. Tellingly, the Cylons' abuse of human women differs strikingly from their treatment of men: while Starbuck and the other women are treated as unwilling incubators, Helo is seduced by a ravishing Athena. Without discounting the mental and emotional manipulation that Helo undergoes, we can draw a clear distinction between the Cylons' treatment of men and women.

Crucially, Helo participates willingly (if unwittingly) in Athena's romantic strategy. As the two dodge Centurions on Caprica, it becomes clear that Helo is falling in love with Athena. The humanoid Cylon models, who are observing them from a distance, decide to test the Galactica pilot. The Centurions come for Athena, staging a capture of the Cylon to test Helo's resolve. The nature of this plot becomes clear in "Litmus" (1.06) when Athena, a Six, and a Four covertly watch Helo choose between continuing his journey or turning back for Athena.³⁴ Helo

³³ *Battlestar Galactica*, "The Farm."

³⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 1, episode 6, "Litmus," directed by Rod Hardy, aired January 28, 2005, on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2005), disc 3.

unknowingly passes the test when he chooses to save Athena instead of rescue himself, which the Cylons reward by sending Athena back pretending to have escaped. Reunited with her, Helo confesses his love:

HELO: Truth is, if something happened to you, I wouldn't know how to deal with it.

ATHENA: I feel the same way.

HELO: Back on [Galactica], I, uh, look, I knew what was going on. I mean, between you and the Chief.

ATHENA: I think everybody did.

HELO: And I respected it, your feelings, his, but I would have given anything to be him. Hey, I'm not trying to put you on the spot here. I don't wanna step into what you two have. You feel the way you feel and I have to respect that.

*Athena interrupts Helo and kisses him.*³⁵

This moment of passion grows, as Helo and Athena unite. Although Helo remains unaware of Athena's true identity as a Cylon, the camera lingers on the naked Athena's mechanical spine, which glows red as they make love. Helo does not notice this change, but the moment reminds the audience that this is no ordinary act, but rather the intersection of human and machine, nature and artifice.

While critics have explored this fusion of races, the crucial role of music has gone unremarked. As Helo professes his love for Athena, McCreary layers the harmonic Helo leitmotif over the Eight leitmotif. A gamelan ensemble initially plays Eight in this scene, the leitmotif's typical instrumentation, but a *duduk* soon takes over the main melodic line. This instrumental combination is particularly striking since the human leitmotifs often feature a *duduk* while Cylon leitmotifs incorporate gamelan and unpitched percussion instruments. The new instrument signals a change of Athena's allegiances: although she seduced Helo under orders, she soon turns against the Cylons and aligns with the humans. Furthermore, this moment of consummation results in Hera, a human-Cylon hybrid.

³⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Six Degrees of Separation."

The music abruptly changes, however, as the camera cuts between shots on Caprica and Galactica. The moment of passion between Helo and Athena is intercut with Boomer's mental anguish onboard Galactica as she worries that she might be a Cylon. The Eight and Helo leitmotifs fade as a percussive ostinato engulfs the scene. Taiko drums, bells, and other metallic instrumentation frantically beat out irregular rhythms that grow in both speed and tension as Boomer screams in frustration and Athena cries out in ecstasy. The Cylon music now drowns out the human instruments that foreshadowed Hera—appropriately, since Boomer will soon discover that she is no human.

In the final moments of Season 1, Athena informs Helo she is pregnant. By this time she knows that she is in love with Helo and has abandoned her fellow humanoid Cylon models in hopes of saving Helo's life and returning him to Galactica. Yet the agonizing knowledge that the woman he loves is not actually a real woman drives Helo to shoot Sharon. Yet Helo ultimately returns to Athena after she reveals that she is pregnant. Helo soon unites with Starbuck, but she attempts to kill Athena after realizing she is a Cylon. Helo slams Starbuck against the wall, saving Athena's life, and desperately proclaims "She's pregnant!"³⁶

Immediately after Helo's plea to Starbuck, the camera cuts to Baltar entering the Opera House on Kobol for the first time. As he and Head Six walk towards the stage, Head Six speaks a profound prophecy over Gaius: "You are the guardian and protector of the new generation of [the Divine]'s children. The first member of our family will be with us soon, Gaius. It's time to make your choice."³⁷ The orchestral Shape of Things to Come leitmotif builds around them and the two approach a glowing cradle. As we saw in Chapter 1, each of the illuminated objects on

³⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2."

³⁷ *Ibid.*

the stage—cradle, banners, and Head Six—holds a particular meaning for the destiny of Baltar. The banners represent the Final Five, Head Six stands in for Caprica Six, and the cradle, we finally learn, represents Hera, the “new generation of [the Divine]’s children.”³⁸ This child is a new species, utterly unlike anything that has come before, and fulfills the Divine’s commandment to the Cylons to procreate.

Figure 44: The Illuminated Cradle in the Opera House³⁹



As argued in Chapter 1, the music in the Opera House further emphasizes the crucial importance of this scene. The orchestral Shape of Things to Come leitmotif plays throughout the scene, growing in grandeur as Head Six and Baltar approach the cradle. Moreover, the traditional symphonic orchestra enters the sound world of *BSG* for the first time in this episode, accentuating the significance of the Opera House to the larger narrative arc. Indeed, the

³⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*

orchestral theme, which immediately follows the news of Athena's pregnancy, can be heard as Hera's leitmotif. This is further emphasized when Head Six speaks the words "Come, see the face of the shape of things to come" as she and Baltar approach the cradle.⁴⁰

The scene suggests another example of how the music directly influence the characters. Indeed, the scene provides a perfect case study for Winters's controversial theory, which we explored in Chapter 3. Pontara, perhaps the most vocal of Winters's critics, argued that viewers impose their own realities onto films and thus do not expect music to influence the characters.⁴¹ Yet Pontara's example is *Saving Private Ryan*, a film thoroughly grounded in our reality.⁴² Science fiction and fantasy, however, offers glimpses into other worlds and, as a result, could potentially have intradiegetic music. Indeed, Winters's use of *Star Wars* as his primary example reinforces this separation from reality.⁴³ Although the final episode of *BSG* announces that the series takes place in our history, the majority of the show seems grounded in a different universe.

Winters's theory of intradiegetic music is controversial, but the world of *BSG* seems to use many of the religious leitmotifs as the will of the Divine. As explored in Chapter 1, the passacaglia bass line of Shape of Things to Come drives Head Six and Baltar forward and perpetuates the cycle of life and destruction first begun on Kobol. The Shape of Things to Come leitmotif is arguably the first musical instance of the Divine's plan in *BSG*, which is further supported through the abrupt change in instrumentation to an orchestra. This first appearance of the orchestra illuminates the significance of this scene, standing in stark contrast to the peculiar

⁴⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2."

⁴¹ Pontara, "Interpretation and Underscoreing," 35.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Winters, "The Non-Diegetic Fallacy," 224.

timbral world of *BSG*. The Shape of Things to Come influences Baltar's actions and perhaps even prompts Head Six's words, leading the two to Hera's cradle.

This leitmotif continues to appear throughout the series, particularly accompanying visions of the Opera House now linked to Hera. As the Opera House reappears, many of the main characters find themselves involved with Hera. Roslin and Athena find their visions center around chasing Hera through the halls of the Opera House. Caprica Six simultaneously dreams that she is accompanying Baltar into the Opera House auditorium, bringing Hera to the stage and leaving Roslin and Athena behind. Her vision in "Crossroads" further complicates the scene, as the Final Five appear in the balcony observing their actions. The Final Five leitmotif accompanies their appearance in the Season 3 finale, demonstrating that the music of the Ionian Nebula still has a purpose. Furthermore, the Shape of Things to Come lingers in the background of many of these visions but mixes with more ominous music, suggesting that Hera has not yet realized her destiny. Nevertheless, the music in the Opera House unites most of the main characters around a single object: Hera.

Figure 45: Caprica Six, Baltar, and Hera in the Opera House⁴⁴



Figure 46: The Final Five in the Opera House⁴⁵



⁴⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Crossroads, Part 2.”

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Composing *la Mestiza*

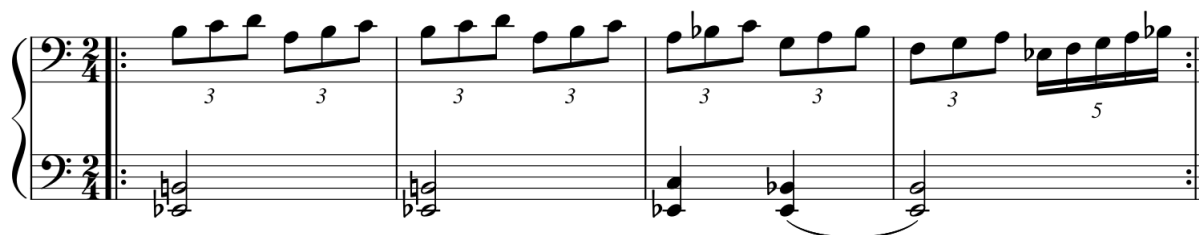
The diegetic and intradiegetic religious music of *BSG* collide in “Someone to Watch Over Me” (4.17).⁴⁶ The episode, which follows Starbuck’s interactions with a piano player, challenges existing diegetic theories as the screenplay incorporates music innovative ways. Furthermore, the music of the episode connects to the overarching religious narrative since the piano player is later revealed to be Starbuck’s father in Messenger form (as hinted at in the Gershwinian title). His presence throughout “Someone to Watch Over Me” serves to connect Starbuck and her destiny directly to the Final Five Cylons, Hera as *la mestiza*, and the Divine’s plan.

Following the discovery of her decaying body on Earth, Starbuck begins “Someone to Watch Over Me” full of frustration and hopelessness. Starbuck does not know what she is (acknowledging that she is neither human nor Cylon) and finds herself without a purpose after completing what she believed was her destiny in leading the Colonial Fleet to Earth. The music further underscores her lack of direction, as Starbuck’s Destiny has not occurred on *BSG* since the discovery of Earth in “Sometimes a Great Notion.” The episode begins with eerie piano arpeggios over an augmented triad that accompany Starbuck through her monotonous daily life as she runs Viper drills and drowns her sorrows in Joe’s Bar (see Figure 47). She finds some

⁴⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4.5, episode 17, “Someone to Watch Over Me,” directed by Michael Nankin, aired February 27, 2009 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 3.

solace at the bar as she talks to a mysterious man at the old, beat-up piano.⁴⁷ Starbuck initially taunts the man and shows a knowledge of classical music, suggesting that he “better learn how to play that thing” and calling out his repetition of previously-composed material.⁴⁸ The pianist, who later reveals his name as Slick, immediately responds to Starbuck’s cavil with a song whose lush parallel chords seem borrowed directly from fin-de-siècle France. The piece sounds familiar, as recalling harmonies similar to the music that followed Starbuck at the opening of the episode (see Figure 48)

Figure 47: Opening Piano Music in “Someone to Watch Over Me”⁴⁹

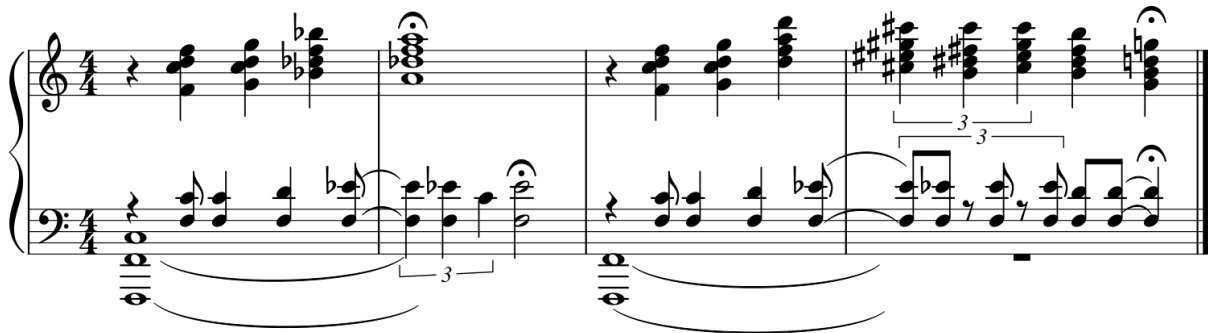


⁴⁷ Director Michael Nankin felt that the piano needed to be considered the last in the universe and, as a result, had the art department “age up” the instrument. Describing his vision, Nankin reflected: “I wanted them to kick the shit out of it – which they did. They added dozens of cigarette burns, rings from drinks, and I had them pull the veneer off several of the keys. They chipped it and gouged it and ruined the surface. They even replaced the legs of the bench with legs that didn’t match...And the finishing touch to this wreck was that somehow, the original velvet dust cover has survived. It’s frayed and stained, but Slick still covers the keys when he’s done playing. As if anything could save this thing.” Bear McCreary, “BG4: ‘Someone to Watch Over Me,’ Pt 2,” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, February 27, 2009, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-someone-to-watch-over-me-pt-2/>.

⁴⁸ McCreary used a musical cue from the 1978 *BSG* as a classical piece that existed in this universe. The cue, which was composed by Stu Phillips, is entitled “Exploration” but Starbuck refers to the piece as “Nomion’s Third” in the screenplay. Bear McCreary, “BG4: ‘Someone to Watch Over Me,’ Pt 3,” *Bear McCreary Official Site*, February 27, 2009, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-someone-to-watch-over-me-pt-3/>.

⁴⁹ Entitled “Elegy” by McCreary. McCreary, “BG4: ‘Someone to Watch Over Me,’ Pt 3,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

Figure 48: Slick's Sonata⁵⁰



Indeed, McCreary's harmonic references in Slick's music relate directly to the genesis of the character. When initially conceiving of the episode, writers Bradley Thompson and David Weddle asked McCreary to compile a playlist for them of existing music that blended jazz and classical together. They believed that Slick, who represented Starbuck's musician father, related to others through music. Weddle explained his conception of Slick to McCreary, whom the writers interviewed as a basis for the character: "At first we gravitated toward a serious classical player whose real love was jazz. We modeled his character in early drafts on Hoagy Carmichael...In both movies, Hoagy plays a kind of piano playing confidant, like a bartender who listens to people's troubles and gives advice."⁵¹ At the suggestion of the writers, McCreary created a classical music playlist of works he considered applicable to Slick, including Maurice Ravel's "Jeux d'eau" and George Gershwin's Preludes, Nos. 1-3.⁵² McCreary noted on his blog that he had already used these works as inspiration for the augmented and dissonant harmonies

⁵⁰ McCreary, "BG4: 'Someone to Watch Over Me,' Pt 3," used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁵¹ Bear McCreary, "BG4: 'Someone to Watch Over Me,' Pt 1," *Bear McCreary Official Site*, February 27, 2009, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-someone-to-watch-over-me-pt-1/>.

⁵² This playlist resulted in the title of the episode, which is taken from a Gershwin song. Weddle found "Someone to Watch Over Me" directly applicable to Slick's character, as his role of Starbuck's Messenger father guides her towards her destiny.

of many religious leitmotifs, including Spiritual Baltar, The Shape of Things to Come, and Disapora Oratorio.⁵³ Notably, the playlist prompted the title of the episode. Inspired by the Gershwin Preludes, Weddle looked through other works by the composer and felt that the title of “Someone to Watch Over Me” was particularly applicable to the relationship between Starbuck and Slick.⁵⁴ Although there is no evidence to suggest that the lyrics similarly inspired Weddle, the Biblical quotation in the song’s verse (“Seek and ye shall find”) further highlights Slick’s angelic role.

Although Slick’s Sonata first appears in the episode as diegetic music, it soon takes on an intradiegetic function. This change seems remarkably strange, however, as the piano music accompanies not Starbuck’s continuing story, but rather that of Tyrol and Boomer. As mentioned in Chapter 2, McCreary already composed a leitmotif for Tyrol and Boomer, which soon evolved into Tyrol’s and Cally’s love leitmotif after Boomer’s departure from Galactica. It would seem more cohesive, then, if McCreary returned to the Tyrol/Boomer leitmotif for their scenes in the episode where Boomer apologizes to Tyrol and together they reflect on what might have been. Yet although the couple’s leitmotif makes a brief appearance, the melody of Slick’s Sonata dominates most of their scenes. McCreary acknowledged this in his blog and noted that he wanted to create a cohesive sound across the episode. Yet we can infer more from the combination of this pairing and music.⁵⁵ Chapter 3 argued that the soundtrack of *BSG* fits Winters’s theory of intradiegetic music in which the music can affect the characters’ thoughts, emotions, and actions. The religious music arguably represents the will of the Divine, which

⁵³ McCreary, “BG4: ‘Someone to Watch Over Me,’ Pt 1.”

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ McCreary, “BG4: ‘Someone to Watch Over Me,’ Pt 3.”

subsequently prods the characters forward towards their destiny. The intradiegetic use of the main melody from Slick's Sonata, then, prompts Tyrol's and Boomer's actions.

The episode primarily follows Starbuck, but the Tyrol and Boomer storyline is essential to advancing the Divine's plan. In "Someone to Watch Over Me," Boomer is to be executed for her attempted assassination of Adama in Season 1. Tyrol resists this, however, due to his former relationship with the Cylon sleeper agent. After a series of meetings with Boomer in her jail cell, which Slick's Sonata underscores, Tyrol decides to free Boomer. This decision ignites a colossal chain reaction of events that leads Boomer to kidnap Hera and flee Galactica. And it is the intradiegetic piano music that influences Tyrol's actions, I shall argue, and prepares the series finale in which diegetic and intradiegetic music team up to save *la mestiza*.

The music of the Opera House has been connected to Hera since the finale of Season 1, but Season 4's "Someone to Watch Over Me" notably features the fusion of Hera and the Starbuck leitmotif. While Starbuck and Hera rarely interact in the series, she and Helo are fast friends. This episode features a scene in which Starbuck's retrieves her auctioned-off belongings from Helo's room and interacts briefly with Hera.⁵⁶ Starbuck rejects the box with one crucial exception: she keeps a musical recording of her father's piano music. At first glance, this scene seems unimportant, intended only to remind Starbuck and the viewers that she died at the end of Season 3. Yet the music of the scene hints at a deeper meaning. As Starbuck takes her belongings from Helo, the Starbuck leitmotif softly plays in the background on a duduk. The leitmotif grows in volume as Starbuck turns to Hera, signaling that a critical moment is approaching. The child presents Starbuck with a simple drawing, a series of colored dots in a

⁵⁶As Helo explains, a dead pilot's belongings are sold off after their death.

wave pattern that looks remarkably similar to a player piano roll.⁵⁷ Starbuck smiles at the “stars” that Hera gave her, glances at the musical recording, and leaves the room.

Figure 49: Hera’s Drawing⁵⁸



The presence of the Starbuck leitmotif suggests that her interaction with Hera is important, but the camera’s glimpse of her father’s music further connects the two. Although the camera only briefly pauses on the recording, the subtitle “Live at the Helice Opera House” stands out.⁵⁹ We may assume that opera houses are common in the *BSG* universe, as suggested by the ruins of the Kobol Opera House, but the building holds distinct meaning in the series as a place

⁵⁷ There is no evidence connecting the art department’s drawing of Hera’s star to player piano rolls, but the similarities are nevertheless striking. Combined with the aged-up salon piano used in Joe’s Bar, we can imagine how the two might unite at the episode’s end.

⁵⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Someone to Watch Over Me.”

⁵⁹ The tracks from this recording are never shown on screen, but McCreary provided names to production to make the recording seem more authentic. On his blog, McCreary wrote that “The Shape of Things to Come” and “Diaspora Oratorio” are the main track titles. McCreary, “BG4: ‘Someone to Watch Over Me,’ Pt 2.”

connected to Hera and the Divine's plan. This is further confirmed as the Opera House visions return to Roslin, Athena, and Caprica Six in this episode. The mention of another opera house provides a subtle connection to Hera, whose connection to the Opera House and The Shape of Things to Come leitmotif has now been clearly established.

Figure 50: Starbuck's Musical Recording⁶⁰



The Starbuck leitmotif intermingles with Slick's Sonata as she interacts with the piano player. Starbuck shares that her father was a classical musician, noting that he taught her to play the piano before abandoning her. As she relates these background details, the melody to Slick's Sonata appears on an alto flute in the background, hinting at his true identity. The melody merges with the Starbuck leitmotif, however, as she continues: "There was this one song he taught me. It made me feel happy and sad all at the same time."⁶¹ In fact, the song that

⁶⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Someone to Watch Over Me."

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Starbuck’s father taught her is foreshadowed in her subsequent dreams. Once more the piano plays a prominent role, but in this particular dream Starbuck sees her younger self on the bench. As she slowly approaches the girl and the instrument, a homophonic song rings in her ears. Starbuck does not recognize the melody, which suggests that this is not the tune her father taught her, but the song remain a clue. The simple chordal accompaniment and melody is in E minor but becomes Phrygian when inverted (see Figures 51 and 52). Furthermore, when transposed, the inverted melody is the Final Five leitmotif, which was first heard in “Crossroads” at the Ionian Nebula (see Figure 53). Not only did “Final Five” serve to awaken Tyrol, Tigh, Foster, and Anders to their identities, but Starbuck returned from the dead to the “All Along the Watchtower” melody.

Figure 51: The Melody in Starbuck’s Dream⁶²



Figure 52: The Melody Inverted⁶³



Figure 53: The Final Five leitmotif⁶⁴



As explored in Chapter 3, we should consider the Final Five leitmotif and the melody to “All Along the Watchtower” as interchangeable. The Season 3 finale depicts Tyrol, Tigh, Foster,

⁶² McCreary, “BG4: ‘Someone to Watch Over Me,’ Pt 3,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁶³ Ibid., used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁶⁴ Ibid., used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

and Anders equating the two – although the diegetic music was only the Final Five melody, the Cylons hummed the melody to “All Along the Watchtower” as the disembodied music.

McCreary’s score in “Crossroads” further underlined this comparison when McCreary layered the two melodies over each other during the climatic diegetic song in the episode. In his online commentary for “Someone to Watch Over Me,” McCreary meticulously described the difficult decision he faced in incorporating a recognizable tune that Starbuck would remember:

I was aware of the revelations that Slick was Kara’s father and that he taught her “Watchtower” when she was young, that Kara would remember the song and play it at the piano with her father. [Writers] David and Bradley also asked me how it could be possible that Hera could create a drawing that would later be revealed to be “Watchtower” in notation. These were all excellent, yet inherently problematic ideas. Kara’s instrumental performance of “All Along the Watchtower,” and Hera’s notation of it, required an identifiable thematic idea. Unfortunately they had picked a song that was not suited for this... My challenge: the song, intended to be ultimately recognizable for the audience, was to be performed without lyrics on a piano and notated by a 3-year old girl! How were we going to pull this off??⁶⁵

As this excerpt shows, McCreary found “All Along the Watchtower” impossible to notate in a recognizable way for the viewers. He argued to the writers that while the lyrics are easily identifiable, the melody is too simple for audience members who were unfamiliar with the song to immediately identify.⁶⁶ Although the writers insisted that the melody be “All Along the Watchtower” to musically unite Starbuck and her destiny with the Final Five, the Ionian Nebula, and the Divine’s plan, the music simply would not work within the confines of the narrative.

McCreary’s solution, then, was to use the Final Five leitmotif. The writers were initially skeptical, but McCreary argued that his diegetic use of the melody alongside “All Along the Watchtower” in Season 3 should make the leap easy for viewers. Furthermore, its intradiegetic application throughout Season 4 as the sound of the Final Five Cylons reinforced its relationship

⁶⁵ McCreary, “BG4: ‘Someone to Watch Over Me,’ Pt 1.”

⁶⁶ Ibid.

to the Divine's plan. The instrumentation of the leitmotif also connects it to McCreary's version of "All Along the Watchtower," as both use sitars, harmonium, and guitars. Finally, McCreary persuaded the writers that the Final Five leitmotif had an important advantage:

The other advantage to selecting the [Final Five leitmotif] as the musical stand-in for "Watchtower" was that it could actually be notated. This is an incredibly important point, because Hera had to write something that Kara would eventually recognize as music. The musical notation of Bob Dylan's or Jimi Hendrix's (or even my) version of "Watchtower" would either be incredibly complex guitar tablature, or an overly simplified "chords and slashes" lead sheet. The [Final Five leitmotif] melody, however, is elegantly short and easily notated.⁶⁷

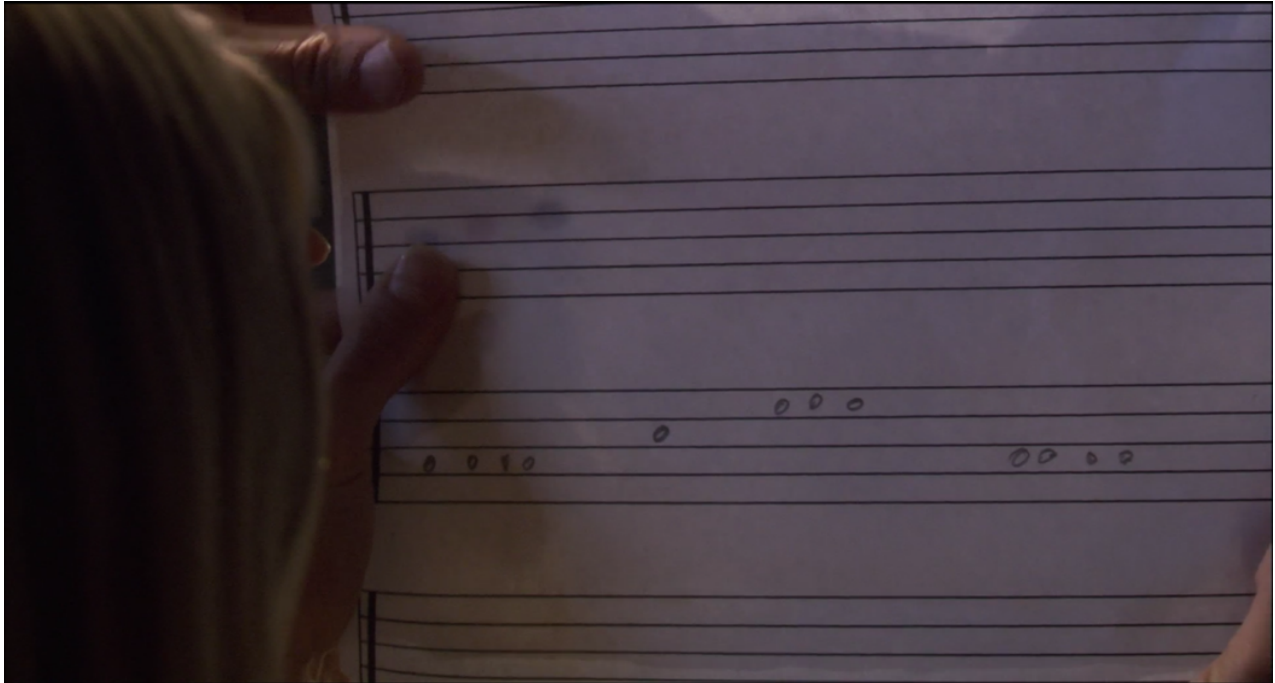
With this final persuasive argument, the writers agreed: the Final Five melody would stand-in for "All Along the Watchtower" in this episode and connect Starbuck and Hera to the Final Five Cylons.

Starbuck discovers her connection to the Final Five leitmotif in the final act of "Someone to Watch Over Me." Sitting on the piano bench, Slick encourages Starbuck to play the song her father once taught her. Starbuck repeatedly refuses, brushing tears off of her face, before finally agreeing to play the song. The camera slowly moves in on Starbuck's hands as she fumbles her way through the first few notes. Starbuck quickly stops playing the familiar melody, muttering that she cannot remember the tune. Slick responds by sketching out the melody on a score. Starbuck stares in shock at Slick's movements before abruptly pulling Hera's drawing of stars out of her pocket. Slick takes the drawing and places it over the staff paper, tracing the shape of the stars as notes. He then gives the score to Starbuck and together they begin to play. Starbuck plays tentatively at first, but bolstered by Slick's rhythmic pulsing in the accompaniment, begins to play the melody with greater confidence. At the other end of Joe's Bar, the Final Five look up

⁶⁷ McCreary, "BG4: 'Someone to Watch Over Me,' Pt 1."

in shock. The music that they hear coming from the piano is the same disembodied music that switched them on at the Ionian Nebula.

Figure 54: Hera's Drawing under Staff Paper⁶⁸



The categorization during this scene is baffling: is the music diegetic or intradiegetic? Since Starbuck plays the tune with Slick at the piano, which is heard by the Final Five in the bar, the viewers may initially assume that the music is purely diegetic. And yet, the piano is not the only instrumentation playing in this climactic moment. Starbuck plays the Final Five leitmotif on the piano, which is also doubled by the duduk, zurna, and erhu. The wailing accompaniment, meanwhile, is played by both the onscreen Slick and the offscreen electric violin, electric bass, electric guitars, and electric sitar. Finally, complement of percussion instruments add rhythmic vitality to the scene. Together, the onscreen piano combines with a mass of offscreen instruments in the revelation that Starbuck, Hera, and the Final Five are all connected through music. This

⁶⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Someone to Watch Over Me."

scene seems to fit best into Stilwell's "fantastical gap," that ambiguous zone that defies easy categorization.⁶⁹

This is not the first time in which music crosses between diegetic realms in science fiction. Indeed, John Williams's Academy Award nominated score for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* explored this technique in 1977. In *Close Encounters*, humanity converses with alien beings on a UFO through the use of light and sound. The theme, a simple five-note motif, remains diegetic throughout most of the film. As the main protagonist enters the mothership at the climactic finale, however, the communication motive transforms from diegetic to nondiegetic. Tom Schneller convincingly argued that this change in diegesis symbolically mirrors the dramatic structure of the film:

Like [protagonist] Roy, who leaves behind his former life and quite literally ascends to a higher state of consciousness, the communication motive leaves the "real" musical space of the film's world and enters the 'metaphysical' level of orchestral commentary – a richly symbolic moment of transcendence.⁷⁰

Schneller concluded that the Williams approached the communication motive teleologically throughout the film, which innovated a new way in which a film's narrative and soundtrack may interact.

Williams's score to *Close Encounters* helped create a fresh wave of science-fiction films and series that incorporated music into the overarching plot. The new *Doctor Who*, for example, uses song as a means of communication with other species in multiple episodes. Using song as a communication device, the tentacle-mouthed Oods telepathically sing to the Doctor, Donna, and

⁶⁹ Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," 186.

⁷⁰ Tom Schneller, "Sweet Fulfillment: Allusion and Teleological Genesis in John Williams's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*," *The Musical Quarterly* 97, no. 1 (2014): 121.

each other in Season 4's "The Planet of the Ood."⁷¹ Similarly, the 2016 film *Arrival* portrays a less-fantastical version of communication, in which human linguists attempt to understand the heptapods through means such as symbols and sounds.⁷² Although aliens do not exist on *BSG*, we should note the similarities in its score and communication through music. Head Six and Head Baltar speak for the Divine, but music also serves to communicate key points. The music in "Crossroads" turns on the Final Five at the Ionian Nebula, for example, instead of Head Six. In "Someone to Watch Over Me," the Messenger Slick speaks directly with Starbuck but uses music to trigger her memories rather than words.

The changing diegesis of the Final Five leitmotif also differs from that in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. In Spielberg's film, the communication motive changes to nondiegetic only in the final minutes. The Final Five leitmotif, however, changes diegesis multiple times over the course of the series. It begins as disembodied, diegetic music at the end of Season 3, transitions to solely intradiegetic throughout Season 4, and is both diegetic and intradiegetic in "Someone to Watch Over Me." The constantly shifting perspective is revolutionary: music simultaneously operates on multiple levels, speaking diegetically to the characters while intradiegetically foreshadowing the series' finale and the climax of the Divine's plan.

Rescuing *la Mestiza*

Although it is the diegetic music that ultimately saves Hera's life, the music crucially maneuvers the characters into pursuing Hera and her captors. Following the kidnapping, Starbuck and the

⁷¹ *Doctor Who*, series 4, episode 4, "The Planet of the Ood," directed by Graeme Harper, aired April 19, 2008 on BBC One, DVD (Warner Home Video, 2008).

⁷² *Arrival*, directed by Denis Villeneuve (Paramount Pictures, 2016), DVD (2017).

Final Five acknowledge that the child plays an essential role for both humans and Cylons. Tyrol, Ellen, Tigh, and Foster unite with Starbuck in the subsequent episode, “Islanded in a Stream of Stars” (4.18), as she attempts to grasp the music’s meaning and how it connects to Hera.⁷³ Only Anders is absent, lying in a coma after being shot in a previous episode. Ellen implores Adama to pursue Boomer and rescue Hera, explaining that the cyborg child represents the fate of Cylons:

ELLEN: She’s not just any child...Hera is our people’s only hope of avoiding eventual extinction.

STARBUCK: She may be our only hope too. We just experienced something remarkable. Hera wrote the notes to a song. The song that my father used to play to me when I was a child.

TIGH: Same song that switched us on when we were in that nebula.

STARBUCK: The same song that led us to Earth. Something is happening here. Something that is greater than all of us and that little girl is in the middle of it. She’s the key, sir.

ADAMA: In other words, it’s our destiny to go after her, right?⁷⁴

The scene begins in silence as Ellen speaks but the Final Five melody slowly plays as Starbuck describes their experiences in Joe’s Bar. The underscoring in this scene stands apart from McCreary’s typical patterns; instead of combining the leitmotif with dissonant harmonies and pulsing percussion, here McCreary only features the monophonic leitmotif. A solo piano plays Final Five in unison with a duduk, which confuses the instrumentation between the diegetic music in “Someone to Watch Over Me” with the common instrumentation of the leitmotif. The underscoring fades as Starbuck finishes speaking, which initially seems peculiar. One may expect Starbuck’s Destiny to begin as Adama responds to her, but instead silence fills the room.

⁷³ Title taken from the Dolly Parton and Kenny Rodgers hit, “Islands in a Stream.”

⁷⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4.5, episode 18, “Islanded in a Stream of Stars,” directed by Edward James Olmos, aired March 6, 2009 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 3.

Although Starbuck's Destiny did not accompany this dramatic scene, the leitmotif returns alongside Spiritual Baltar as the two characters discuss the role of angels. Baltar has been notably absent from the main narrative for most of Season 4 but his character arc describes the evolution of scientist into religious prophet. At the beginning of "Islanded in a Stream of Stars," Baltar delivers an emphatic speech to his followers, describing his encounters with Head Six:

I want to tell you a secret about myself. Something that I have belatedly come to understand. You see, I don't believe that [the Divine] speaks to us on high through some appointed human mouthpiece. But he does speak to us. He speaks to each one of us directly in our hearts, and it's up to us to listen. If you find yourself straying from the one true path, then perhaps you'll be lucky enough for [the Divine] to send you an angel to steer you in the right direction. Angels, I hear you say. I don't believe that angels appear to you in some mystical spectral form. Angels take the guise of those who are nearest and dearest to you. Those who can understand your doubt and your trials and steer you back on the road to salvation. I believe in these angels because I see them.⁷⁵

Baltar's voice swells as he delivers his speech, accompanied by the Spiritual Baltar leitmotif that is played by gamelan ensemble and bansuri. The instrumentation changes to a solo erhu, however, as the camera cuts to Starbuck listening over the radio. For most listening to Baltar, he is simply waxing poetic. Fresh from her encounter with Slick, however, Starbuck is intrigued. Has Baltar also seen a Messenger?

The Starbuck's Destiny leitmotif finally returns as Starbuck confronts Baltar about his speech. McCreary subtly connects the two religious leitmotifs by once more using a solo erhu; this time, however, it plays Starbuck's Destiny. This scene marks the first time that the leitmotif returns since Starbuck discovered her body in "Sometimes a Great Notion." It is particularly striking that McCreary used the Starbuck leitmotif rather than her destiny leitmotif in "Someone to Watch Over Me" when she interacted with Hera, but brings Starbuck's Destiny back as she talks with Baltar. Although we can only speculate on this perplexing decision, the leitmotif

⁷⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Islanded in a Stream of Stars."

permeates the scene. Perhaps McCreary did not want to waste the return of Starbuck's Destiny in an episode already packed with musical revelations. In "Islanded in a Stream of Stars," however, the return of the leitmotif is abundantly clear. Together, the leitmotifs draw Baltar and Starbuck closer to their destinies and unite them in the pursuit of knowledge: who are the Messengers?

The Starbuck's Destiny leitmotif plays multiple times after her confrontation with Baltar, including a scene in which Starbuck puts a picture of herself up on Galactica's "In Memoriam" wall. Following their conversation, Starbuck finally accepts that she died on Earth and is now a different being sent for a purpose. She decides to pursue her destiny, as encouraged by Slick and Baltar, and goes to speak with a comatose Anders: "Why am I here? I think it has something to do with this music."⁷⁶ With this statement, the intradiegetic destiny leitmotif plays one last time as Starbuck tries to solve the puzzle of "All Along the Watchtower."

"Islanded in a Stream of Stars" also features the return of the Opera House dreams. The episode begins with Roslin, Athena, and Caprica Six sharing an Opera House vision, which notably have been absent since "Guess What's Coming to Dinner?" (4.07).⁷⁷ The ten-episode hiatus of the visions had a narrative purpose, however, as Caprica Six discovered she was pregnant with Tigh's child in the following episode, "Sine Qua Non" (4.08).⁷⁸ Her pregnancy represented the first conception of a fully Cylon child, previously thought to be impossible, and thus alleviated the pressure on Hera to continue the Cylon bloodline. Caprica Six miscarried,

⁷⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Islanded in a Stream of Stars."

⁷⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Guess What's Coming to Dinner."

⁷⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4, episode 8, "Sine Qua Non," directed by Rod Hardy, aired May 27, 2008 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 4.

however, in “Deadlock” (4.16) – making Hera once again the only naturally conceived child from a Cylon.⁷⁹

The music in the Opera House vision of “Islanded in a Stream of Stars” further underlines the importance of rescuing Hera. In previous Opera House visions, McCreary used a mixture of *The Shape of Things to Come* and *Final Five* in the auditorium, but utilized anxious tonal clusters as Roslin and Athena chase Hera through the halls. In this dream, however, the dissonant voices are accompanied by sipsi, shofar, conch, and other wind instruments.⁸⁰ The ominous winds not only amplify Roslin’s and Athena’s anxieties, but also serve to connect the Opera House visions to the action aboard *Galactica*. As Ellen convinces Adama to rescue Hera, she reveals that Boomer took the child to the Cylon Colony. The camera cuts to reveal the Colony, accompanied by a cue with the same instrumentation, which McCreary described as “a wave of wailing, screaming tones that would rank among the most cacophonous sounds I’ve ever created for a soundtrack.”⁸¹ The Cylon Colony represents the final battle in *BSG* and, as a result, necessitates dramatic and dissonant music. That this instrumentation is also connected to the Opera House, however, suggests that more will happen than a simple rescue mission.

The music prompts the characters to rescue Hera, but it also evolves to embody Hera herself in the series finale. As explored in the previous chapters, a mixture of leitmotifs occurs in every *BSG* episode and enriches the narrative, yet none exist specifically for Hera. This absence of music for Hera reflects her function on *BSG* as a plot convenience rather than a developed character. Although the entirety of the show’s religious narrative revolves around Hera’s

⁷⁹ *Battlestar Galactica*, season 4.5, episode 16, “Deadlock,” directed by Robert M. Young, aired February 20, 2009 on Sci-Fi, DVD (Universal Studio Home Entertainment, 2009), disc 2.

⁸⁰ Bear McCreary, “BG4: ‘Islanded in a Stream of Stars’.”

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

conception, birth, and survival, the child never speaks or develops as a character. With only one exception, she is seen silently holding her parents' hands or drawing; only in the Opera House dreams does she laugh, run, and shine in white garments. As Lorna Jowett argued, Hera functions merely as an object of scientific, political, and religious scrutiny, which both the heroes and villains of *BSG* (including Roslin, Cavil, Boomer, D'Anna, and even Athena) seek to possess as a means to power.⁸² The absence of an individual leitmotif creates an analogous musical objectification of Hera. The Shape of Things to Come might be heard as Hera's music since it first occurs when Head Six tells Baltar of Hera's impending birth, but it seems to relate much more to Baltar's destiny than Hera's. Furthermore, Head Six holds up Hera as the future of the Divine's children rather than an ordinary girl with a personality, proclaiming that she is "the face of the shape of things to come."⁸³

In "Daybreak," however, McCreary develops a pre-existing leitmotif for Hera. Although the Eight leitmotif normally represents Boomer, Athena, and the other Eight models, it expands to include Hera in the series finale.⁸⁴ Set in three parts, "Daybreak" (4.19-21) follows the final movements of Galactica after Adama decides to save Hera. The leitmotif first appears as Boomer and Cavil nefariously discuss how best to study Hera; it could arguably represent Boomer in this scene, but the camera tightly zooms in on Hera's face as the bansuri and gamelan ensemble play Eight. The instrumentation of Eight rarely departs from the gamelan ensemble, but McCreary sets it in a string orchestra as Adama debates whether or not to save Hera. As explored in Chapter 1, the traditional orchestra alerts viewers to take note, as the Euro-Western instruments rarely appear in the *BSG* soundscape. Because of this drastic departure from the leitmotif's

⁸² Jowett, "Frak Me," 63.

⁸³ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2."

⁸⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Daybreak, Part 1."

original scoring, we might well designate the string version of Eight as the Hera leitmotif, signifying both her identity as a hybrid and destiny as *la mestiza*. In this scene, Adama studies a picture of Athena and Hera on the “In Memoriam” wall, supposedly placed there by a grieving Athena. The Military leitmotif plays as Adama surveys the wall before finding Hera’s photo. The strings climb the highest note of the leitmotif as Adama walks away but hold the pitch instead of finishing the melody when Adama pauses in the doorway. The music then abruptly changes to the modified Eight leitmotif, or the Hera leitmotif, at twice its normal tempo, which seemingly influences Adama to turn around. The bansuri accompanies the emotional, sighing strings in a solemn restatement of the Hera leitmotif, which addresses Adama directly and prompts his resolution to rescue the child.

Although the Hera leitmotif seemingly influences Adama’s thoughts, the Spiritual Baltar leitmotif impacts Baltar’s actions in the series finale. Throughout Season 4, Baltar has been relatively removed from the serial narrative onboard *Galactica* and instead preoccupied with guiding his monotheistic followers. McCreary used Spiritual Baltar to show Baltar’s changing attitude towards religion, but the continuing presence of the original Baltar leitmotif suggests that the scientist has not fully abandoned his old ways. The first appearance of Spiritual Baltar in the series finale occurs as Head Six ominously alludes to Baltar’s prophesied destiny: “The end times are approaching. Humanity’s final chapter is about to be written and you will be its author.”⁸⁵ The gamelan ensemble plays Spiritual Baltar through this statement and the camera focuses on the scientist’s shocked face. It seems as though Baltar finds Head Six’s comments worrisome, but the comforting presence of his religious leitmotif suggests that he should not be afraid.

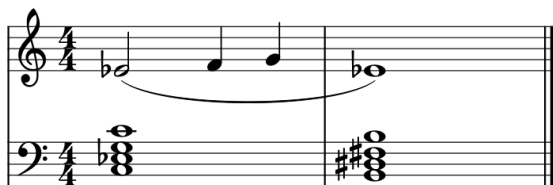
⁸⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 1.”

Baltar continues to battle between selfish and altruistic impulses in “Daybreak,” a struggle that also plays out between his leitmotifs.⁸⁶ The two musical sides of his personality—represented by a duduk playing Baltar and a gamelan ensemble playing Spiritual Baltar—battle for dominance in a scene that Baltar shares with Apollo. As the scientist requests that his religious followers receive representative in the Colonial Fleet government, Spiritual Baltar reflects his altruistic efforts. The underscoring in the scene abruptly shifts to the Baltar leitmotif, however, as Apollo lambasts Baltar, attacking his narcissism and lack of selfless impulses:

What I know is that in all the years that I’ve known you, I’ve never seen you make one truly selfless act. Never seen you do something that didn’t, on some level, serve the greater needs of Gaius frakking Baltar...Go ahead, look me in the eye and tell me about the time that you made a truly heroic act of conscience, which helped you not even in the slightest.⁸⁷

As explored in Chapters 2 and 3, McCreary composed Spiritual Baltar out of the small melodic motif in the Baltar leitmotif to differentiate character’s struggle between heroism and cowardice (see Figures 55 and 56). Apollo’s words foreground the Baltar leitmotif and seemingly to signal the character’s return to his cowardly ways.

Figure 55: Baltar leitmotif⁸⁸



⁸⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Parts 2 and 3.”

⁸⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 1.”

⁸⁸ McCreary, “Themes of *Battlestar Galactica*, Pt. I,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

Figure 56: Spiritual Baltar leitmotif⁸⁹



This leitmotif contest concludes in “Daybreak, Part 2” as Baltar’s redemption arc finally culminates. Initially, the character’s instinct for self-preservation appears to win out as Baltar chooses to save himself rather than participate in the rescue mission. Nevertheless, he ultimately decides to give away his power to his religious followers and chooses instead to help save Hera after a conversation with Head Six:

HEAD SIX: There’s no need to torture yourself, Gaius. Just trust in [the Divine’s] plan for you.

BALTAR: What is [the Divine’s] plan for me?

HEAD SIX: Well, you’re following it right now.⁹⁰

Spiritual Baltar plays in the background of this scene, which seems to help prompt him to be courageous and save Hera. In the dramatic scene when Baltar leaves his followers behind, the *duduk* and gamelan ensemble fight for dominance before Spiritual Baltar finally overtakes the Baltar leitmotif. The music seems to have a direct influence on the character: the triumph of Spiritual Baltar provides courage to Baltar as he makes the first truly selfless act of his life. In this moment, the egotistical scientist that accidentally betrayed humanity is no more and a humble, redeemed man rises up in his place.

The use of Spiritual Baltar and Starbuck’s Destiny throughout Season 4 shows the influence that music has on narrative in *BSG*. Both leitmotifs play alongside evolving characters who have been told they have a destiny. Neither of them believe this, however, until the final

⁸⁹ McCreary, “BG4: ‘He That Believeth...’,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁹⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 2.”

episodes of the series. The intradiegetic religious music maneuvers Starbuck and Baltar to a place of acceptance. Furthermore, the religious leitmotifs guide both characters to Hera's rescue mission, showing the cyborg child's essential role in the Divine's plan. The plan has yet to be revealed to the *BSG* viewers, but the leitmotifs foreshadow that the child is central to the continuing existence of both humans and Cylons.

Protecting *La Mestiza*

The leitmotifs of the Opera House visions, the "All Along the Watchtower/Final Five" music, and the orchestral exultation of Baltar's first Opera House experience all coalesce in the final hour of *BSG*. Adama's plan to rescue Hera brings Galactica and a team of volunteers directly to the Colony for one final battle. The Final Five unite in Galactica's CIC (Combat Information Center) to control the ship while Athena, Helo, Starbuck, and Apollo form an attack team to enter the Cylon Basestar and retrieve Hera. Baltar and Caprica Six, however, stand at the ready to defend Galactica from intruders. The two share a brief moment of acceptance after Caprica Six admits that she is proud of Baltar, which leads the Messengers to reveal that both Caprica and Baltar see them:

HEAD SIX: All the pieces are falling into place.

HEAD BALTAR: You will hold the future of Cylons and humans in your hands.

CAPRICA SIX AND BALTAR (simultaneously): I will? *To each other*: You see them?⁹¹

Although brief, this shared moment between the four depicts that the Divine's plan in climbing to its climactic finale. Caprica Six and Baltar have reunited and the Messengers have brought them closer through their shared experiences with the angels. The music in this scene reinforces the Messengers present, as McCreary layers the Six leitmotif with its retrograde. As discussed in

⁹¹ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Daybreak, Part 2."

Chapter 2, the Six leitmotif represents both Head Six as well as Caprica Six (see Figure 57).

Head Baltar, however, does not share any leitmotifs with Baltar; instead, McCreary first depicted the incorporeal being with a retrograde of the Six leitmotif to show Head Six's angelic counterpart (see Figure 58). When played simultaneously by bells and gamelan, these two leitmotifs meld together to form a cohesive sound, representing the unification of Caprica Six and Baltar in this scene.

Figure 57: Six leitmotif⁹²



Figure 58: Head Baltar leitmotif⁹³



⁹² McCreary, "Themes of Battlestar Galactica, Pt. I," used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

⁹³ Bear McCreary, "BG4: Daybreak, Parts I & II," *Bear McCreary Official Site*, March 21, 2009, accessed June 29, 2020, <https://www.bearmccreary.com/#blog/blog/battlestar-galactica-3/bg4-daybreak-pt-2/>, used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

Figure 59: Caprica Six, Baltar, Head Six, and Head Baltar Meet⁹⁴



The Opera House visions return and meld with reality after the attack force returns to Galactica with Hera. Roslin, who is helping the wounded in sick bay, abruptly slips into a vision of Hera in the Opera House, running through its red velvet hallways in her pure white clothes. Roslin quickly snaps back but abandons her post, muttering “Hera” under her breath. The music during this scene continues to mark time, featuring slow-moving dissonant harmonies with no discernible melody that originated in the shared “Crossroads” dreams. Following Roslin’s vision, Helo is shot down by a Centurion and Athena rushes to his side, putting Hera down in the process. Although Helo quickly tells Athena to leave him and save their daughter, Hera has fled the room. Athena starts screaming the same words from her dreams without realizing their weight: “Hera! Come back here, Hera!”⁹⁵ McCreary sets this pivotal scene with the Helo

⁹⁴ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 2.”

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

leitmotif, which is full of dark and dissonant harmonies that perfectly encapsulate the drama of the moment. As Athena begins to chase Hera, however, a female chorus sings wordless, dissonant chords as the camera cuts between Hera, Athena, and Roslin running through the halls of the gray and desolate Galactica and the lush halls of the Opera House. The visions meld with reality, the strings slowly play arpeggios, the voices grow louder, and the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif grows out of the dissonant chords.

Figure 60: Hera Running in Galactica⁹⁶



⁹⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 2.”

Figure 61: Hera Running in the Opera House⁹⁷



The orchestral music of the Opera House finally fills the halls of Galactica when Caprica Six and Baltar encounter the escaped Hera. Strings join with the solo female voice as Roslin and Athena make eye contact and realize in that moment that their Opera House visions have come to fruition. The Roslin/Kobol leitmotif plays as the two women stare in shock at each other. A solo soprano sings in Latin, reflecting the enormity of this moment:

Omnia illa et ante fiebant	All of this has happened before,
Omnia illa et rursus fient	And all of this will happen again.
Ita dicimus omnes.	So Say We All. ⁹⁸

Both the leitmotif and text reflect the cyclical nature of *BSG*. We have discussed the Sacred Scrolls phrase, “All of this has happened before, and all of this will happen again” in a variety of contexts.⁹⁹ The words apply not only to the Opera House visions, but “All Along the

⁹⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 2.”

⁹⁸ McCreary, “BG4: ‘Daybreak, Parts I & II’.”

⁹⁹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Flesh and Bone.”

Watchtower” and the Final Five leitmotif. Furthermore, McCreary set this text to music only once before, in “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.” The Season 1 finale, which featured Athena’s pregnancy announcement and the first Opera House appearance, also included these words over the Roslin/Kobol leitmotif and opened the religious serial arc on *BSG*. The music portrays the correlations between this scene on Galactica and the Opera House visions, which is amplified by the cinematography cutting between the two locations.

The music of the Opera House comes to fruition after Caprica Six and Baltar unite with Hera. The low strings begin to play oscillating E-major arpeggios in a slow and steady 6/8, hinting at Baltar’s first experience in the Opera House with Head Six (see Figure 62). The upper strings join in with a soaring descant as the double basses continue the arpeggios and the cellos play The Shape of Things to Come melody. Baltar pauses, as if hearing the intradiegetic music, and immediately finds himself standing in the Opera House. The cinematography and music align, reflecting the exact melody and shot from “Kobol’s Last Gleaming, Part 2.”¹⁰⁰ He turns and sees Caprica Six as if for the first time, comprehending that she too shares in these visions. As the camera cuts between Galactica and the Opera House sequences, Baltar and Caprica Six understand that this is where Head Six and Head Baltar have led them:

BALTAR: I’ve been here before.
CAPRICA SIX: Yes.
BALTAR: We’re supposed to...
CAPRICA SIX: Go into the Opera House.¹⁰¹

With this statement, the music engulfs the scene. The strings orchestra jubilantly plays The Shape of Things to Come. The scene continues cutting between Galactica and the Opera House

¹⁰⁰ For a full description of this scene, see Chapter 1.

¹⁰¹ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 2.”

and Baltar takes Hera from Caprica Six’s arms and they walk into the Opera House: Galactica’s CIC.

Figure 62: The Shape of Things to Come arpeggios¹⁰²



Figure 63: The Shape of Things to Come leitmotif¹⁰³



The intradiegetic music of *BSG* leads Baltar to save Hera’s life and fulfill his destiny in the CIC. As Baltar and Caprica Six enter the room, *The Shape of Things to Come* modulates from E Major to the relative C# minor, suggesting that peril awaits inside. The transition to C# minor directly leads into the Final Five leitmotif, which takes its home key from “All Along the Watchtower.” The cinematography combines shots from Galactica and the Opera House in this reveal by splicing together eyeline matches from Baltar in the Opera House looking up at the Final Five in the CIC. McCreary sets this unveiling with dramatic instrumentation, including strings, an electric bass, electric guitars, a sitar, and a harmonium.¹⁰⁴ The importance of the religious intradiegetic music of *BSG* cannot be overstated: Spiritual Baltar transformed Baltar

¹⁰² McCreary, “BG4: ‘Daybreak, Parts I & II’,” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

¹⁰³ Ibid., used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

¹⁰⁴ On his blog, McCreary reiterated that he did not know how the Opera House and “All Along the Watchtower” would combine when he composed the “Final Five” leitmotif for “Crossroads”: How did I plan that out, you ask? Did I know when I wrote “The Shape of Things to Come” in E major that I was writing in the relative major of “All Along the Watchtowers” C# minor and that four years later I would use their close tonal proximity to expertly weave together these two seemingly disparate pieces of music? The answer is... no. I didn’t know. It was a happy coincidence. McCreary, “BG4: ‘Daybreak, Parts I & II’.”

into a redeemed man, the Shape of Things to Come leitmotif led him into the Opera House, and the Final Five leitmotif serves as a reminder that this is not the end. Although the music successfully brought Hera into the Opera House, she is not yet saved.

Caprica Six has fulfilled her destiny by bringing Hera into the Opera House, but Baltar still must fulfill Head Six's prophecies of being "the protector of [the Divine]'s children."¹⁰⁵ A rogue Cavil model seizes Hera and threatens to kill her unless they are allowed to leave. This is Baltar's moment of reckoning; Head Six returns to him one last time to help the scientist fulfill his destiny of saving not only Hera, but humanity as well. Baltar begs those in the room to come to a treaty, and his pleas sway all who hear them:

CAVIL: This thing is the key to my people's survival and I'm not leaving without it.

BALTAR: Hera's not a thing. She's a child and she holds the key to humanity's survival as well.

CAVIL: And how do you know that?

BALTAR: I see angels. Angels in this very room. Now, I may be mad, but that doesn't mean that I'm not right. Because there's another force at work here. There always has been, it's undeniable. We've all experienced it. Everyone in this room has witnessed events that they can't fathom, let alone explain away by rational means. Puzzles deciphered in prophecy. Dreams given to a chosen few. Our loved ones, dead, risen. Whether we want to call that God or Gods or some sublime inspiration or a divine force that we can't know or understand, it doesn't matter. It's here. It exists and our two destinies are entwined in its force.¹⁰⁶

McCreary initially introduces Baltar's speech with the last occurrence of the Baltar leitmotif, but quickly transitions into Spiritual Baltar as the character fulfills his destiny and convinces Cavil to let Hera go. Spiritual Baltar plays in counterpoint with The Shape of Things to Come as Cavil and Baltar come to an uneasy alliance:

CAVIL: If that were true, and that's a big if, how do I know this force has our best interests in mind? How do you know that [the Divine] is on your side, Doctor?

BALTAR: I don't. [The Divine's] not on any one side. [The Divine's] a force of nature, beyond good and evil. Good and evil – we created those. You wanna break the cycle?

¹⁰⁵ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2."

¹⁰⁶ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Daybreak, Part 2."

Break the cycle of birth, death, rebirth, destruction, escape, death? Well, that's in our hands; in our hands only. It requires a leap of faith. It requires that we live in hope, not fear.¹⁰⁷

Although McCreary used *The Shape of Things to Come* here to further reflect the Opera House, we can draw stronger parallels between the leitmotif and Baltar's speech. Chapter 1 explored the form of *The Shape of Things to Come* leitmotif, noting its repeating passacaglia bass line and possible correlations to "All this has happened before, and all this has happened again."¹⁰⁸ Baltar directly references this cycle in his speech, imploring Cavil to let Hera go as the circling passacaglia plays underneath his words. Baltar succeeds in saving the future of the humans and Cylons as Cavil releases Hera and calls off the attack.

Intradiegetic and diegetic music unite to fulfill the Divine's plan and save Hera as the main characters gather in the CIC. The intradiegetic music brought Hera safely into the Opera House, but she is not yet saved. Pandemonium ensues after Tyrol murders Foster (see Chapter 2) and the soundtrack reflects the anxiety of the moment with the largest ensemble throughout *BSG*, which includes electric fiddle, percussion, strings, bagpipes, shamisen, biwa, tsuzumi, and wordless voices. The chaotic scene on Galactica worsens as all characters prepare to die, but Starbuck battles her way to the coordinate map. The nearly destroyed Galactica, with the ability of light-speed jumps, can move only one more time and it is up to Starbuck to plug in the coordinates. The lights flash, the camera moves erratically, but the music suddenly builds. As Starbuck stands in front of the coordinates, she hears the music. A cascade of flashbacks fill the screen, including Slick and Starbuck at the piano and Hera's star drawing. She focuses on Slick's face as he says, "Just trust yourself," and suddenly understands what she must do, uttering the

¹⁰⁷ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Daybreak, Part 2."

¹⁰⁸ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Kobol's Last Gleaming, Part 2."

opening words of the Dylan song: “There must be some kind of way outta here.”¹⁰⁹ As the memories fill Starbuck’s mind, the pulsing bass line of “All Along the Watchtower” begins. The music intensifies as Starbuck begins hearing phrases from her past:

STARBUCK (from “Islanded in a Stream of Stars”): I thought that if I assigned numbers to the notes...

STARBUCK (from “Sometimes a Great Notion”): If that’s me lying there, then what am I?

LEOBEN (from “The Road Less Travelled”): I look at you now and I don’t see Kara Thrace. I see an angel blazing with the light of God. An angel.¹¹⁰

Starbuck's Destiny leads the character to her destiny, just as Spiritual Baltar did earlier.

Starbuck begins plugging coordinates in, using the notes of the Final Five leitmotif as numbers to create 1123-6536-5321 (see Figure 64). The piano plays each number as she hits the button, emphasizing that the sequence is musical. The ship jumps, the music abruptly ends, and the crew of Galactica find themselves at an extraordinary end point: Earth.

Figure 64: The Final Five Coordinates¹¹¹



This is not the Earth of the Thirteenth Tribe, but our own Earth. Upon arriving, the crew of Galactica, the remaining Cylons, and the remnant of humanity decide to colonize and blend in with the humans already on the planet. The Shape of Things to Come leitmotif plays one last time, beginning as Baltar admits that he loves Caprica Six. The two decide to live together and

¹⁰⁹ Dylan, “All Along the Watchtower.”

¹¹⁰ *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 2.”

¹¹¹ McCreary, “BG4: ‘Daybreak, Parts I & II,’” used with the permission of NBCUniversal Media, LLC.

embrace their unknown future – this time without prophecies and visions guiding their actions. The camera then cuts to Adama describing the Earth to a now deceased Roslin, marveling at its wonders as the camera pans out to reveal the mountainous landscape before abruptly cutting to black. This is not the final shot: the camera focuses in a tight shot on Hera’s face. A gamelan ensemble plays the oscillating arpeggios from *The Shape of Things to Come* leitmotif, strings softly echo the passacaglia line, and the scene fades out from her face to a series of nature shots and a dramatic title card that reads “150,000 Years Later.”¹¹² In these final moments of *BSG*, Hera’s destiny and the fate of humanity is finally revealed. Walking in modern times New York City, Head Six and Head Baltar discuss Hera’s role as the Mitochondrial Eve of Earth. This assertion refers to the modern theory of a Mitochondrial Eve as the most recent common ancestor of humanity.¹¹³ By uniting real scientific thought with the world of *BSG*, the series creators located *BSG* in human history, implying that all living humans trace their lineage to a cyborg woman.

Although *BSG* is a series about the resilience of humanity and its quest for Earth, the final moments of the show resonate on a much deeper level. Hera as *la mestiza* is the promise for a better future, for a greater generation unbound by race, class, and spirituality. Furthermore, Hera’s destiny as the Mitochondrial Eve of Earth only occurs because of musical associations. The Opera House visions save Hera’s life by inspiring Roslin and Athena to chase the child through the halls of Galactica into Caprica Six’s arms. Spiritual Baltar redeems the character and allows him to enter into the Opera House with Caprica Six and give his powerful monologue on the nature of the Divine and angels. Starbuck’s Destiny similarly guides Starbuck to

¹¹² *Battlestar Galactica*, “Daybreak, Part 2.”

¹¹³ Roger Lewin, “The Unmasking of Mitochondrial Eve,” *Science* 238, No. 4823 (1987): 24–26.

acknowledge her deceased humanity and acceptance her unknown, yet prophesied, destiny. Finally, the diegetic “All Along the Watchtower” and Final Five leitmotif intermingle to activate the Final Five, place them in the CIC, and unify them with Starbuck to save Hera through musical coordinates. The music of Baltar’s and Head Six’s Opera House exploration in “Kobol’s Last Gleaming” ultimately serves as essential foreshadowing of Hera’s importance: the orchestral music that swirls around her cradle in Season 1 culminates in the musical narrative of *BSG*’s final season.

The unification of different functions of music in *BSG* portrays the larger dichotomies found within the series. Monotheism and polytheism, Cylon or human, diegetic or intradiegetic, Eastern and Western instrumentation – all play a crucial role in *BSG*. These dichotomies, however, unite in *la mestiza*. It seems unlikely that Anzaldúa and Haraway wanted their cyborg theories mapped onto a patriarchal theology that features a male deity using predestination to create this utopian world. And yet, *BSG* also breaks down these traditional barriers. Although described as a male, the Divine presides over a matriarchal society led by Roslin. Furthermore, while the Cylons and humans are initially placed in opposition, the series finale shows the rise of hybridity through their union. Perhaps most remarkable is the blurred edges between polytheism and monotheism, as the Divine uses the Sacred Scrolls and the history of Kobol to drive the humans toward Earth. Ultimately, the disintegration of these divisions is spearheaded not by narrative alone, but by the combination of narrative and music. *La mestiza* lived to create a new world, and she did so through the revolutionary unification of diegetic and intradiegetic music.

Epilogue

Times Square, 2009: Head Six and Head Baltar discuss Hera's descendants. Noting that all of humanity is half-human and half-Cylon, the two Messengers gleefully predict the future of this world. The Messengers stand surrounded by technology and observe how robotics has once more progressed:

HEAD SIX: Commercialism, decadence, technology run amok. Remind you of anything?
HEAD BALTAR: Take your pick. Kobol. Earth. The real Earth, before this one. Caprica before the fall...¹

As they walk through Times Square, the similarities are striking to the world of *BSG*. Where was once a stretching landscape is now filled with large screens, skyscrapers, and noise. The camera zooms in on a window display in which a robot dances. Although Head Six hopes that modern Earth will not fall—like the others before it—the abundance of technology seems to defy her optimism. Hera was *la mestiza*, saved to create a new world where the cycle would not continue; and yet, humans are once more technologically dependent. The music in the scene further establishes the point as Jimi Hendrix's cover of "All Along the Watchtower" plays. It is a new performer, but the message remains the same: "There must be some kinda way outta here, said the joker to the thief. There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief."² The song engulfs all other sounds as the Messengers slowly walk away. As they leave, the camera cuts to show modern robotics that look incredibly life-like. Are we doomed to create a new generation of Cylons or has the cycle been broken?

"All this has happened before, and all this will happen again."

¹ *Battlestar Galactica*, "Daybreak, Part 3."

² Bob Dylan, "All Along the Watchtower."

Appendix A – The Characters of *BSG*

The characters are listed in alphabetical order and the actors who play them are listed in parenthesis.

Humans

Adama, Lee “Apollo” (Jamie Bamber)

Viper pilot on Galactica. Son of William Adama, married to Anastasia Dualla. His relationship with his father is tumultuous at the beginning of the series but they eventually reconcile. Apollo is idealistic and often sides with President Roslin’s leadership of the government over his father’s military leadership. Apollo begins dating the Galactica Communications Officer Anastasia Dualla in Season 2 and they get married between the events of Seasons 2 and 3. He is promoted to the Commander of the Battlestar *Pegasus* but returns to Galactica after it is destroyed. He has an affair with the fighter pilot Starbuck during Season 3. He defends the scientist Baltar at his trial and leaves the military for politics in Season 4. He and Dualla briefly reconcile after the Fleet finds Earth. He ends the series alive and alone.

Adama, William (Edward James Olmos)

Commander of Galactica, father to Apollo. Adama begins the miniseries on the brink of retirement, but the Cylon invasion makes him the highest-ranking officer left in the Colonial Fleet. Adama eventually falls in love with Roslin, the President of the human survivors, and ends the series alive on Earth.

Agathon, Karl “Helo” (Tahmoh Penikett)

Raptor crewman on Galactica. Husband to Athena, father to Hera. Helo is partnered with the fighter pilot Boomer and the two land on Caprica during the miniseries. He gives up his position

on the Raptor for the scientist Baltar and stays behind. He meets up with Athena, who is impersonating Boomer, and admits his love. He soon realizes that she is a Cylon but stays with her after realizing that she is pregnant with his child. The two eventually make their way back to Galactica and he has to fight to save her life many times. He ends the series alive on Earth with Athena and Hera.

Baltar, Gaius (James Callis)

Scientist, Vice President (Season 1-2), President (between Seasons 2 and 3), and religious leader (Season 4). Guided throughout the series by The Messenger (self-professed Angel of God) Head Six. Baltar has a relationship with the Cylon Caprica Six in the miniseries and realizes that he has unknowingly led the Cylons into the Colonial defense mainframe. Caprica Six saves his life when a nuclear bomb hits the planet Caprica and he escapes on Boomer's raptor. He creates a Cylon detector and becomes Vice President under President Roslin's request. He eventually becomes President and has the Fleet settle on a planet they name New Caprica. After the Cylons arrive, he surrenders and is taken back to the Cylon Basestar. He helps the Cylon D'Anna find the Temple of Five (a temple created for the Cylon God) and is taken back to Galactica to stand trial. While in jail, he begins writing on the merits of monotheism and is visited by believers. He lives with them after being acquitted but finally breaks away to help on the rescue mission for the child Hera, who is half human and half cylon. He saves Hera and convinces the Cylon Cavil to back down killing Hera. He and Caprica Six end the series together.

Cain, Helena (Michelle Forbes)

Admiral of the Colonial Fleet. Resides on the Battlestar Pegasus. Cain takes control of the Fleet after her appearance in Season 2. She and Adama conspire to assassinate each other but do not follow through with their designs. She is killed by the Number Six Cylon Gina.

Dualla, Anastasia (Kandyse McClure)

Communications officer on Galactica. Married to Lee "Apollo" Adama. Dates presidential aide Billy Keikeya through Season 2 but eventually turns down his marriage proposal for Apollo. Serves as Apollo's Executive Officer onboard the Battlestar Pegasus until it is destroyed. She leaves him after he defends Baltar as Baltar's lawyer, but they briefly reconcile before she commits suicide upon the discovery that Earth is a nuclear wasteland.

Gaeta, Felix (Alessandro Juliani)

Tactical Officer on Galactica. Gaeta works with Baltar to create the Cylon-detector and eventually serves as his Chief of Staff on the planet New Caprica. Gaeta is ostracized by his fellow crewmates upon their return to Galactica for his role in surrendering to the Cylons on New Caprica. Gaeta serves under the fighter pilot Starbuck on a mission on the ship Demetrius and loses his leg after a skirmish on a mission. After returning to the Battlestar Galactica he organizes a mutiny with the rebel Tom Zarek and, after it fails, is executed by Battlestar Galactica Commander Adama.

Keikaya, Billy (Paul Campbell)

Aide to President Roslin. Billy dates Dualla throughout Season 1 and proposes marriage in Season 2. He is killed during a hostage situation.

Roslin, Laura (Mary McDonnell)

President of the Twelve Colonies. Roslin begins the miniseries as the Secretary of Education but is thrust into the role of President after the Cylon attack. Roslin has breast cancer, which she nearly dies of in Season 2 before being saved by the blood of the half human-half Cylon child Hera Agathon. Roslin is a devout polytheistic, leading the Fleet to spiritual signposts and eventually Earth through her unwavering belief. She has dreams of the Opera House throughout the series, which lead her to the halls of Galactica in the finale of Season 4. Her cancer returns at the end of Season 3 and she dies in Adama's arms at the end of the series.

Thrace, Kara "Starbuck" (Katee Sackhoff)

Viper pilot on Galactica. Married to Samuel Anders. Starbuck has a close relationship with Adama and Apollo, having been previously engaged to Adama's other son and Apollo's brother, Zak, before Zak's untimely death. Starbuck is a polytheistic believer who disobeys Adama's orders by going to the planet Caprica for President Roslin to find the Arrow of Apollo. While on Caprica, she meets Anders and is kidnapped by the Cylons and has her eggs harvested. Eventually she escapes, flying herself, the Cylon Athena, and the pilot Helo—the two of whom had become lovers--back to Galactica. Anders eventually joins her on Galactica and the two begins a relationship and get married on the planet New Caprica. She later cheats on Anders with Apollo. Starbuck dies in the episode "Maelstrom" after being shot down by a Raider. She returns at the end of Season 3, however, to lead the Colonial Fleet to Earth. Throughout Season 4, Starbuck struggles with her identity, particularly after discovering her dead body on the Earth of the Thirteenth Tribe. The Cylons believe that Starbuck has a destiny and plays a crucial role in the Cylon God's plan. This is realized in the series finale when Starbuck jumps Galactica to our

modern Earth after realizing that the music she hears is the coordinates to our Earth. She disappears at the end of the series, accepting that she has fulfilled her destiny as an angel.

Tyrol, Cally (Nicki Clyne)

Deckhand on Galactica. Married to the mechanic Galen Tyrol, mother to baby boy Nicky. Cally kills the fighter pilot Boomer after the reveal that she is a Cylon and only receives 30 days in the brig as punishment. She and Tyrol eventually begin a relationship, get married, and have a child. She discovers that Tyrol is a Cylon, however, and, so that she does not reveal Tyrol's identity as such, is murdered by presidential aide Tory Foster. After her death, Tyrol discovers that she had an affair with the fighter pilot Hot Dog and that Nicky is Hot Dog's son.

Zarek, Thomas (Richard Hatch)

Political activist, known terrorist, and eventual Vice President of the Twelve Colonies. Zarek often tries to seize power but always fails. He leads a mutiny with tactical officer Gaeta and is executed in Season 4.

Cylons

Centurions

Metallic creations by the humans that revolted and began the Cylon War. These Centurions are precursors to the humanoid models.

Raiders

Planes with consciousness that serve as the Cylons' air force.

Number One, John Cavil (Dean Stockwell)

Cavil is depicted as the true villain of *BSG*. He is the only Cylon humanoid model to know the identities of the Final Five. Cavil goes undercover during the early seasons, working with both Anders on Caprica and as a priest in the Fleet before discovery. He boxes the Number Three model after she discovers the Temple of Five and wants to lobotomize the Centurions. This leads to the Cylon civil war, aligning his model with Numbers Four, Five, and Boomer. He has Boomer kidnap Hera and intends to experiment on the child. He is talked down in the CIC by Baltar and agrees to end the fighting. Cavil kills himself, without the resurrection technology, as the Colony is destroyed.

Number Two, Leoben Conoy (Callum Keith Rennie)

Described as the philosopher of the Cylon models, Leoben spends the series obsessed with Starbuck. He first tells her that she has a destiny in Season 1 but is soon executed before she can get more answers. He keeps her hostage on New Caprica, convincing her that he created a child out of an egg harvested from her in Season 2. He makes amends with her in Season 4 and helps her find her body on Earth. Leoben is the only male-appearing Cylon that sides with the Colonial Fleet in the Cylon civil war.

Number Three, D'Anna Biers (Lucy Lawless)

D'Anna first appears as a reporter on Galactica and discovers that Athena is pregnant. She brings this information back to the other Cylons, which leads to them abducting Hera on New Caprica. D'Anna begins a sexual relationship with Baltar in Season 3 and becomes increasingly obsessed with finding the identities of the Final Five. She finally discovers them in the Temple of Five but dies and is boxed before she can tell anyone. Her model is unboxed during the Cylon Civil War

and she sides with the Twos, Sixes, and Eights. After discovering that Earth is a nuclear wasteland, she stays behind to die instead of continuing on with the Fleet.

Number Four, Simon O'Neill (Rick Worthy)

First featured in Season 2 as the doctor that harvests Starbuck's eggs. Number Four sides with the Ones and Fives in the Cylon Civil War.

Number Five, Aaron Doral (Matthew Bennett)

Appears in the miniseries as an undercover agent but is quickly framed as a Cylon by Baltar. He appears throughout the Caprica scenes with Six and Eight during their hunt for Helo. Number Five sides with the Ones and Fours in the Cylon Civil War.

Number Six, Caprica Six (Tricia Helfer)

In the miniseries, Caprica Six is sent by the Cylons to seduce Baltar and gain access to the defense mainframe. She succeeds but falls in love with Baltar in the process. She appears again in Season 2 where it is revealed that she regularly speaks to Head Baltar. They meet again on New Caprica and she takes him back to the Cylon Basestar but informs Baltar that she no longer loves him. She helps Athena take Hera back to *Galactica* and is imprisoned once she arrives. Caprica Six also shares in visions of the Opera House with Roslin, Athena, and Hera. She begins an affair with Tigh in Season 4 and is released after the Sixes come to a truce with the Colonial Fleet. Caprica Six stands with Baltar during Hera's rescue mission and brings the child into the CIC. She ends the series alive and with Baltar on Earth.

Number Six, Gina (Tricia Helfer)

Gina is a Number Six model that was discovered on the Battlestar *Pegasus* and imprisoned.

Baltar helps her escape in Season 2 and Gina subsequently kills Admiral Cain. Gina sets off a nuclear bomb on her ship, *Cloud Nine*, which kills her but her self-sacrifice brings the Cylons to New Caprica.

Number Eight, Sharon “Athena” Agathon (Grace Park)

Officer on *Galactica*. Married to Karl “Helo” Agathon, mother to Hera. Athena first appears saving Helo on Caprica as she tries to fulfill her mission and seduce him. She succeeds but Helo discovers she is a Cylon. He stays with her, however, after she informs him that she is pregnant. Athena accompanies Starbuck and Helo back to *Galactica* and is immediately imprisoned. She and Helo continue their relationship and she gives birth to Hera in Season 2. She is accepted by the humans and promoted to an officer between Seasons 2 and 3. She gets Hera back in Season 3 but the child is taken by Boomer in Season 4. Athena kills Boomer in the series finale. She ends alive and on Earth with Helo and Hera.

Number Eight, Sharon “Boomer” Valerii (Grace Park)

Officer on *Galactica*. Boomer begins the miniseries unaware of her true nature. As Season 1 progresses, however, Boomer begins finding herself in compromising positions. She finds a Cylon Basestar full of Number Eight copies in the Season 1 finale and, after returning to *Galactica*, shoots Adama. She is jailed, killed by Cally, and dies in Tyrol’s arms before resurrecting on a nearby Cylon basestar. She appears on New Caprica and attempts to care for Hera on the Cylon Basestar. Later, she sides with the Ones, Fours, and Fives in the Cylon Civil

War. She brings Ellen back to *Galactica*, is jailed, freed by Tyrol, and kidnaps Hera. She is finally killed by Athena who has come to rescue Hera.

Final Five Cylons

Anders, Samuel (Michael Trucco)

Caprica resistance leader. Married to Kara “Starbuck” Thrace. A former athlete, Anders survived the bombing of Caprica and leads survivors on missions against the Cylons. He meets fighter pilots Starbuck and Helo, who promise to return for him. Starbuck returns at the end of Season 2. Anders and Starbuck marry on New Caprica and Anders helps lead the resistance against the Cylons on New Caprica. He discovers that he is a Cylon in the Season 3 finale and spends the majority of Season 4 grappling with his identity. He and Starbuck rekindle their relationship following her return but Anders is shot during the mutiny. After surgery, Anders is comatose. The Cylons hook him up to *Galactica* and he becomes the battlestar’s hybrid (see section below on hybrids). He flies *Galactica* and the rest of the Fleet into the Sun at the series’ end.

Foster, Tory (Rekha Sharma)

Aide to President Roslin. Foster first appears as Roslin’s new aide in Season 2 after Billy’s death. She conspires to manipulate the election results so that Roslin wins but is unsuccessful. She discovers that she is a Cylon at the end of Season 3 and embraces her new identity much more easily than any of the others. She murders Cally to protect Tyrol and seemingly lacks guilt. Tyrol murders her in the series finale after discovering what she did to Cally.

Tigh, Ellen (Kate Vernon)

Married to Saul Tigh. Ellen is initially assumed dead after the fall of the Twelve Colonies. She enables many of Tigh’s bad habits, including his alcoholism. She is flirtatious with everyone but

always comes back to her husband. On New Caprica, she gives classified information to the Cylons to save Tigh's life, which leads to Tigh tearfully killing her for treason. She is presumed dead until she is revealed as a member of the Final Five in Season 4. She ends the series alive and with Tigh on Earth.

Tigh, Saul (Michael Hogan)

Executive Officer (XO) of Galactica. Married to Ellen Tigh. Tigh is an alcoholic who misses important events and duties early in the series due to his drinking. He is loyal only to Adama and is incredibly strict. After Adama is shot at the end of Season 1 and becomes incapacitated, Tigh takes over command of *Galactica* and imposes martial law on the Fleet. He leads the resistance against the Cylons on New Caprica in Season 3, losing an eye in the process, and kills Ellen after her betrayal. He spirals into depression after these events and discovers that he is a Cylon along with the others. He reveals his true identity to Adama in mid-season 4 but stays on as the XO. He has an affair with the Cylon Caprica Six before Ellen returns and ends the series alive on Earth with Ellen.

Tyrol, Galen (Aaron Douglas)

Senior Chief Petty Officer on Galactica. Married to Cally Tyrol. Begins the series in a secret relationship with the fighter pilot Boomer and is devastated to discover that she is a Cylon. Due to their relationship, Tyrol is accused of being a Cylon as well but later released. He aids the fighter pilot Helo in rescuing Helo's lover Athena when she is under threat of rape and is imprisoned on *Pegasus* until Admiral Cain is assassinated. He and Cally, a mechanic, get married and he leads the resistance on New Caprica with Tigh and Anders. At the end of Season 3, Tyrol discovers that he is a Cylon. After Cally is murdered, Tyrol discovers that his son,

Nicky, is not his, but fathered by another man. The Cylon Boomer is imprisoned on *Galactica* and Tyrol releases her, inadvertently allowing her to kidnap Hera. He participates in the rescue mission but murders fellow Final Five Tory Foster. He ends the series alive and decides to live in Scotland.

Hybrids

Hybrids

The step between Centurions and the humanoid models of Cylons. The hybrids control the Cylon Basestars and often speak prophetically.

Hera Agathon

Daughter of Sharon “Athena” Agathon and Karl “Helo” Agathon. Born in Season 2, Hera is stolen back and forth between the humans and the Cylons as both want to control her. Hera is a cyborg child and represents the futures of both the humans and machines. Roslin hides Hera away after her birth but the child is taken to the Cylon Basestar after New Caprica. She is then returned to Athena in Season 3 and kidnapped back by Boomer in Season 4. She ends the series alive on Earth with her parents.

Messengers

Head Six

A self-professed angel of God, Head Six appears in the form of Number Six to Baltar throughout the series and encourages him to embrace his destiny. Head Six is intricately connected to the Opera House and leads Baltar to eventually save Hera. She appears with Head Baltar in the final scene of the series, walking through modern New York City.

Head Baltar

Much like Head Six, Head Baltar appears to Caprica Six in Baltar's form and guides her through the series. He and Head Six appear in the final scene of the series, walking through modern New York City.

Slick

An angelic form of Starbuck's father sent to help her remember the music that leads to Earth.

Appendix B – Season Synopses

Miniseries

Aired December 2003 on Sky1 (UK) and Sci-Fi (US)

The Cylons return after forty years of silence and launch a nuclear attack on the Twelve Colonies. The battlestar Galactica survives this attack, mainly because Commander Adama never updated the system to link with the military computer network. After realizing that he is the highest-ranking military officer left, Adama orders Galactica to Ragnar Anchorage, in which munition is stored, so that they can attack the Cylon Basestars.

Sharon “Boomer” Valerii and Karl “Helo” Agathan briefly land on Caprica to repair their ship before heading back to Galactica. While on Caprica, they are overwhelmed with civilians fleeing the nuclear destruction and hold a lottery to give three civilians a ride. Helo gives up his spot, however, after spotting the scientist Gaius Baltar in the crowd. He believes that Baltar is the greatest mind in the Colonies and hopes that he can help save humanity. Boomer and Baltar leave in the Raptor, stranding Helo on Caprica.

Laura Roslin is on-board a separate ship when she receives word that the Twelve Colonies are under attack. She soon learns that she is next in the chain of command for President of the Twelve Colonies and is sworn in. Roslin also secretly informs her aide that she is dying of breast cancer. She, along with her military escort (Captain Lee “Apollo” Adama), decides to find other surviving ships and head to Ragnar Anchorage to rendezvous with Galactica.

At Rangar Anchorage, Adama discovers that Cylons now look human after a run-in with a Number Two, Leoben Conoy. Meanwhile, Baltar finds himself visited by an incorporeal form of Caprica Six, the Cylon who manipulated him into giving her access to the defense mainframe. Adama and Roslin disagree about what to do, but Roslin ultimately wins and the new Colonial

Fleet departs together looking for a new place to live. Adama announces to the Fleet that he knows the location of the mythical Earth and will take them there. The episode ends with a reveal: Sharon Valerii is a Cylon.

Season 1

Aired October 2004 – January 2005 on Sky1 (UK)

Aired January 2005 – April 2005 on Sci-Fi (US)

In the Colonial Fleet

The humans spend the season fleeing from the Cylons. Boomer—a sleeper agent Cylon—is unaware of her true identity and keeps finding herself in compromising positions that suggest she is unconsciously sabotaging the Fleet. She tells her secret lover, Tyrol, that she is worried that she's going crazy. Roslin commissions Baltar to create a Cylon-detector, which he completes with the help of Head Six. Roslin then asks Baltar to become her Vice President, unaware that he helped the Cylons in the miniseries. Starbuck interrogates a Number Two Cylon who believes that she has a destiny.

The Fleet discovers the planet Kobol, the birthplace of humanity, but Roslin and Adama disagree as to its importance. Roslin, who is a strong believer in the Lords of Kobol, asks Starbuck to return to Caprica and retrieve the Arrow of Apollo, which should point their way towards Earth. On an expedition mission to Kobol, Baltar's ship crashes and he is stranded. Head Six leads Baltar into the ruins of the Kobol Opera House where she tells him that he has a destiny. Adama arrests Roslin, citing her interference in military matters. Boomer successfully destroys a Cylon Basestar but shoots Adama in the chest upon returning.

On Caprica

Helo is pursued by Cylon Centurions but saved by a Number Eight pretending to be Boomer.

She has been tasked with seducing Helo, as the Cylons believe that they need to procreate. Helo discovers that Sharon (Athena) is a Cylon but allows her to remain alongside him after she reveals that she is pregnant with his child.

Season 2

Aired July 2005 – September 2005 on Sci-Fi

In the Colonial Fleet

Saul Tigh leads Galactica as Adama undergoes surgery after the shooting. Baltar, Tyrol, and Cally remain stranded on Kobol as they fight off Cylon Centurions and hope for rescue. Roslin is held in the Galactica brig and receives many visitors who see her as a religious figure. Tigh declares martial law, which causes the Colonial Fleet to rebel against Galactica. The group on Kobol are rescued, only for Tyrol to be thrown into jail because of his associations with Boomer. He is soon freed, however, after clearing Baltar's Cylon test. Boomer is set to be transferred but is shot by Cally and dies in Tyrol's arms. Adama returns to command after recovering from his wounds and Apollo helps Roslin escape Galactica's brig. Roslin tells the Fleet that she will return to Kobol and Adama is shocked when over a third of the ships follow her.

On Caprica

Athena steals Starbuck's ship, leaving Starbuck and Helo stranded on Caprica. The two stumble upon a group of human resistance fighters, led by Samuel Anders. Starbuck and Anders sleep with each other but Starbuck is subsequently captured by the Cylons. She awakes to discover that her eggs have been harvested and she realizes that she is in a Cylon "farm" where the machines

are attempting to impregnate human women. Anders and Helo rescue Starbuck and Athena returns. She, Starbuck, and Helo head back to Galactica and Starbuck promises Anders that she will come back to rescue him and his group.

Reunited

Starbuck, Helo, and Athena arrive at Kobol and find Roslin. Apollo and Roslin try to kill Athena, as they know she is a Cylon, but are stopped when she reveals that she knows the location of the Tomb of Athena. They, along with the terrorist Tom Zarek, land on Kobol and start trekking towards the tomb. Adama arrives and apologizes, asking to bond the Colonial Fleet back together. Zarek tries to convince Athena to kill Adama but instead she shoots one of Zarek's companions. The group arrives at the Tomb of Athena and use the Arrow of Apollo to enter. They see constellations that point to Earth and decide to follow the path.

Back on Galactica, Athena is placed in a cell and Baltar realizes that she is pregnant. Head Six confirms that Athena's unborn child is the baby she alluded to in the Opera House. Athena saves the crew of Galactica from a Cylon computer virus, showing that she is loyal to the Fleet. Her pregnancy is discovered, however, by a reporter soon revealed to be a Cylon (Number Three, D'Anna Biers). The battlestar Pegasus arrives and Admiral Cain takes charge of the Fleet.

Season 2.5

Aired January 2006 – March 2006 on Sci-Fi

Cain and Adama continue their uneasy alliance but both secretly plot to have the other assassinated. Cain asks Baltar to get her Cylon prisoner to talk, who Baltar discovers is a Number Six model named Gina. Athena reveals that the Cylons have resurrection technology, where their consciousnesses are downloaded into new copies, and that resurrection ships hold the

bodies. The military sets up an attack on a resurrection ship; while the attack is underway, Baltar frees Gina. Adama and Cain call off their assassination plots but Gina kills Cain, leaving Adama in charge of the Fleet once more.

Roslin lies on her deathbed and realizes that she once saw Baltar flirting with a Number Six model on Caprica. She attempts to tell the others, but they assume she is hallucinating. Roslin also orders that Athena's pregnancy be terminated, but later rescinds this order. Baltar discovers that the blood cells from Athena's fetus will save Roslin's life, which leads to her recovering from her cancer. Baltar then announces his candidacy for President in the upcoming election. Athena gives birth and Roslin has the child kidnapped, telling Athena and Helo that the baby died in labor.

Starbuck returns to Caprica for Anders but one of the team (Racetrack) gets lost and discovers a habitable planet. Roslin argues that the Fleet should continue forward but Baltar believes that they should create a new society on this planet. Starbuck returns to Galactica and Tyrol realizes that one of the Caprica "humans" is actually a Number One Cylon. Baltar wins the election and declares that they settle on "New Caprica." He tries to convince Gina to join him, but she instead sets off a nuclear warhead and murders all onboard her ship, killing herself as well.

The season ends 380 days later. Starbuck and Anders are married and living on New Caprica while Adama and Dualla are married and living on Pegasus. New Caprica is attacked by Cylon basestars and the Adamas decide to save those onboard Pegasus and Galactica, jumping away from New Caprica. Baltar surrenders to the Cylons, leaving his life and the majority of the human remnants' in the hands of the Cylons.

Season 3

Aired October 2006 – March 2007 on Sci-Fi

The Cylon occupation on New Caprica continues and they force Baltar to sign execution orders. Tyrol, Tigh, and Anders continue to lead a resistance and Tigh loses his eye after the Cylons torture him. Tigh discovers that Ellen leaked important information to the Cylons and kills her as punishment. Leoben is holding Starbuck captive in attempts to win her affection, including lying that she has a daughter. Pegasus and Galactica return on a rescue mission and the remaining humans are evacuated. During the rescue, Number Three realizes that Hera is alive and abducts the child. Baltar is taken to a Cylon Basestar as prisoner but his aide, Gaeta, escapes.

In the Colonial Fleet

Roslin resumes the presidency in Baltar's absence. Gaeta is belittled as being a Cylon collaborator and is almost killed by a secret tribunal of Tigh, Tyrol, and Anders. Roslin gives a blanket pardon, noting that everyone did what they needed to do to survive. Gaeta realizes that they need to head towards the Lion's Head Nebula in order to continue their search for Earth. Finally accepted as part of the Galactica crew, Athena officially takes her callsign. It is revealed through flashbacks that Apollo and Starbuck admitted love to each other on New Caprica. They agreed to be together, but Starbuck ended up marrying Anders out of fear, which led to her estrangement from Apollo. In present time, they reconcile and begin an affair.

In the Cylon Fleet

The Cylons debate whether or not to kill Baltar, but he is ultimately saved by Caprica Six. Baltar reciprocates by telling the Cylons about the Lion's Head Nebula. Baltar discovers that there are five more models of Cylons, but Caprica Six tells him that it is forbidden to discuss them.

Number Three becomes increasingly obsessed with finding the Final Five Cylons. Baltar wants to help her, as he is convinced that he is a Cylon. A hybrid onboard the Basestar tells them to find the Eye of Jupiter.

Reunited

The Colonial Fleet discovers an algae planet and inspects it for resources. While there, Tyrol discovers the Temple of Five. A Cylon Basestar appears, however, which holds Baltar and the Number Three searching for the Eye of Jupiter. Athena discovers that Hera is alive and on the Cylon Basestar. Number Three brings Baltar to the Temple of Five and has a vision of the Final Five. Baltar asks her if he is one of the Final Five but Number Three dies before responding. Tyrol arrives and arrests Baltar while Hera is returned to Athena and Helo.

Baltar is held in prison for his crimes on New Caprica. Starbuck becomes increasingly erratic, which results in her being shot down in battle with the Cylons and killed. Baltar goes to trial, defended by Romo Lampkin and Apollo. Baltar is eventually acquitted. Tyrol, Tigh, Anders, and Foster begin hearing strange music, which switches them on when the Fleet arrives at the Ionian Nebula. There, they realize that they are four of the Final Five Cylons. Starbuck returns from the dead and tells Apollo that she knows where to find Earth.

Season 4

Aired April 2008 – June 2008 on Sci-Fi

The Cylons attack in the Ionian Nebula but the Raiders turn around after scanning Anders's eye and realizing that the Final Five are in the Colonial Fleet. Starbuck believes that she has only been gone for 6 days and returned with a brand new Viper. She passes Baltar's Cylon-detector but Roslin still does not believe that Starbuck is herself. The Fleet jumps away from the Ionian

Nebula and Starbuck loses her orientation towards Earth. Apollo leaves Galactica to start his political career.

Baltar is taken in by a group of women who followed his spiritual lectures and begins to perform miracles, such as healing a sick child. The Cylons break into a civil war after Number One reveals that they have always known the identities of the Final Five. The Ones, Fours, and Fives, and Boomer fight against the Twos, Sixes, and Eights. Adama gives Starbuck a ship and a crew, including Helo and Gaeta, to try and find Earth. Cally discovers that her husband, Tyrol, is a Cylon and is subsequently murdered by Foster.

Baltar's group of monotheistic believers continues to grow but they are attacked by a terrorist group. Roslin tries to eliminate his power but is countered by the Quorum, led by Zarek. Anguished by his Cylon nature and the previous murder of his wife, Tigh visits Caprica Six and they begin an affair. Starbuck orders her ship to meet with Leoben's Basestar after hearing of the Cylon civil war but her crew mutinies and Gaeta is shot in the leg. Gaeta's leg is amputated, and the Twos, Threes, Sixes, and Eights decide to return to Galactica with Starbuck.

Roslin boards the Cylon Basestar but it abruptly jumps away. In her absence, Apollo is named acting President of the Colonies and Caprica Six becomes pregnant. The Cylons on the Basestar lead an attack on the Resurrection Hub, destroying all of their extra bodies. The Basestar then returns to the Fleet and Roslin orders the Final Five to reveal themselves. All on Galactica are distraught to discover the true identities of Foster, Tyrol, Anders, and Tigh. Starbuck inspects her Viper and discovers that it's emitting a signal. The season ends as the Fleet finally arrive at Earth, only to discover it is a nuclear wasteland.

Season 4.5

Aired January 2009 – March 2009 on Sci-Fi

On Earth, the Fleet realizes that the Thirteenth Tribe were Cylons rather than humans. Distraught that Earth is ruined, Dualla commits suicide. Starbuck and Leoben go searching for the beacon's origins and discover her burned corpse and Viper. The Final Five realize that they used to live on Earth and Tigh remembers that Ellen is the fifth Cylon.

The Cylons want to become citizens of the Twelve Colonies and are opposed by Zarek and Gaeta. Together, the two lead a mutiny. Baltar and the Final Five help Roslin escape. Adama takes back Galactica and executes the mutineers but Anders is wounded in the process. Ellen, who is held hostage by Cavil, escapes with Boomer's help. Anders comes out of surgery and is comatose. Ellen and Tigh reunite while Caprica Six loses her pregnancy.

Starbuck remembers a song from her childhood, which happens to be the same music that switched on the Final Five at the Ionian Nebula. As she remembers, Boomer kidnaps Hera. Adama leads a rescue mission to save Hera and Athena kills Boomer. The Opera House visions come to fruition and Baltar convinces Cavil not to destroy Galactica. While the Final Five are returning resurrection technology to the Cylons, however, Tyrol kills Foster. Chaos ensues and Starbuck quickly jumps the ship away, leading them to new Earth. There, Roslin finally passes away, Starbuck disappears, and the rest of the characters pick places to finally settle down. The series ends with Head Six and Head Baltar reminiscing in modern Times Square.

Glossary

Bānsurī: A bamboo flute from India that consists of two pipes. One plays the melody (5 finger holes) and the other is a drone.

Berimbau: A Brazilian chordophone. It has a flexible stave that is curved through the tension of the strings connecting the two ends.

Duduk: An Armenian reed instrument similar to the oboe that is played with circular breathing.

Erhu: A two-stringed instrument from China similar in pitch to a violin.

Gamelan: An ensemble of pitched and unpitched instruments (such as metallophones and xylophones) that originated in Indonesia.

Glass marimba: An idiophone with keys made of glass. This produces an ethereal timbre compared to a wooden marimba.

Shofar: A Jewish liturgical instrument known as the “ram’s horn” in the Bible that is most often used for signalling.

Sipsi: A single-reed instrument native to the Mediterranean region around Greece and Turkey that is played with circular breathing.

Taiko drums: Japanese percussion instruments that include a broad range of drums.

Temple bowls: Also known as a standing bell. This is an inverted bell that is often used to accompany Buddhist chants.

Tines: A series of metal teeth (or tines) that can be plucked and often attached to a resonator.

Yayli tambur: A lute from Turkey that has a long neck and is bowed.

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