

LUCAS

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I composed a leitmotif for LUCAS, a character in a hypothetical RPG. LUCAS is a noble aristocrat with a staunch penchant for nobility and virtue. Although an older gentleman himself, LUCAS has quite the combat ability. The player first meets LUCAS early in the game during a cutscene, but an air of mystery surrounds him. After encountering LUCAS a few more times, LUCAS eventually joins the player's party as an ally—but not before a battle to test the player's ability. It is only after traveling with LUCAS for a great while that LUCAS's motivation and tragic backstory are revealed: as a child, he helplessly watched the Big Bad murder his family before his very eyes.

The following four measures are LUCAS's leitmotif, which I have annotated with a few distinctive characteristics:

Lucas - Motif

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The musical notation for the Lucas Motif is a four-measure phrase in 4/4 time, marked with a tempo of 112. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notation includes the following annotations:
 - Measure 1: *running start* (quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5)
 - Measure 2: *sliding fall* (quarter notes C5, B4, A4, G4)
 - Measure 3: *3-3-2 rhythm* (quarter notes G4, quarter notes A4, quarter notes B4, quarter notes C5)
 - Measure 4: *harmonic suspension* (quarter note G4)
 Chords are labeled above the staff: IVmaj7, Vadd6, Imaj7, and I7(4-3).

Theme. I tried to draw out these distinctive characteristics and expand them into a full theme for LUCAS. The theme's classical string quartet and smooth voice leading gives an impression of sophistication, and the calm wash of sound from the harmonic accompaniment reflects LUCAS's understated but dedicated personality (the simplistic harmonic accompaniment also allows for great flexibility in rearrangement, a very useful feature for a leitmotif). I also added a B section with gallant leaps that alludes to LUCAS's noble fighting prowess, and a rubato coda that evokes a sense of tragic loss.

Battle Theme. I then rearranged LUCAS's main theme into a high-energy battle theme, which trades the calm string quartet for two trumpets, two violins, a cello, and (of course) percussion, all in a key one half-step higher. The battle theme also features a faster tempo, and, in lieu of the ending coda (whose somber mood does not fit well with the high energy of battle), a dominant seventh chord at the end that sets up a return back to the very beginning of the piece, allowing the music to loop for as long as it takes for the battle to complete. Additionally, the dynamics are more consistently loud throughout the piece, and many of the notes gain additional staccato "punch" to sound more active and aggressive.