**Boy in the Striped Pajamas Soundtrack Review**

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James Horner's latest score (the music that has been composed for a film, play, or musical) follows many of his established tendencies, but with remarkable grace and emotional power.

His latest score, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, does indeed recycle some very specific material from previous Horner scores, but instead of simply rehashing them and pasting them directly into the new work, for *Pajamas* he fleshes them out and dresses them up in a highly effective new package that glimmers with charm and innocence in its brightest moments, and trembles with terror and heartbreak in its darkest.

**Ethereal (heavenly) Atmospheres in Horner's Score**

Horner uses an attractively soothing set of orchestral and synthetic sounds to construct his score. Horner give his music an enchantingly ethereal atmosphere, with tingling light percussion, echoing woodwind solos and very light synthesized elements.

The moods thus established are marked by their innocence, faint sense of wonder, and charming delicacy.

Another main ingredient in the score is the piano, which is remarkably energetic and exuberant, and its cheery innocence is an appropriately naïve way to begin the album; for the score takes a markedly darker tone during its second half.

**Heart-Wrenching Change of Mood in *Pajamas* Soundtrack**

As the story of the film shifts from the innocence and naiveté of its beginnings to the stark horror and heartbreak of its conclusion, so does the music. Beginning in the fifth track of the album, the darker tone of the second half of the score becomes firmly manifest by the seventh track: a sense of gloom and despair begins to permeate each cue. Themes are stated in purposeful minor keys, at much slower rhythms and in lower registers; melodic statements become fewer and more sparsely written.

The tone shifts slowly from this point to one of tension, then to a shocking climax, then finally to a state of profound heartbreak. The final minutes of “Strange New Clothes” are practically shrieking in their intensity, and shockingly dark and dissonant. The ultimate cue, “Remembrance, Remembrance,” restates the title theme, this time on solo piano, in a pointedly slower, less enthusiastic manner than the opening track.

**Summary**

Beginning with lush and exuberant themes of wonder and innocence, and gradually twisting them into horrific, devastating sequences of heartbreak and trauma, Horner’s score, despite its obvious adherence to his own personal habits and tendencies, is a powerful and gripping musical depiction of the horror of the holocaust, as viewed through the eyes of a child.