



Top Scores #3: Alexandre Desplat & The Grand Budapest Hotel

Description



Not since David Lean's epic *Dr Zhivago* has the Russian balalaika played such a significant role in a soundtrack, than that of Wes Anderson's 2014 comedy *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Having worked previously with Anderson on *The Fantastic Mr Fox* and *Moonrise Kingdom*, Parisian composer Alexandre Desplat was recalled to provide the film's Eastern European influenced score.

Looking back on Anderson's filmography music has played more than just a significant role, not only accentuating the quirky characteristics of his films but adding an important fantastical element. Much of the music was originally composed by Desplat, who chose the Balalaika as the score's signature

instrument. The pieces are orchestral in nature, but the instrumentation is not with the Russian instrument adding its own unique tone. The score's Balalaika orchestra was made up of 35 players and works effectively to circumvent the tone of traditional, well-worn film orchestration.

As well as the original score, Desplat included a number of Russian folk songs to stoke the mood of the soundtrack. The Church Organs, music boxes and yodeling choirs of these songs are important in punctuating Desplat's fluttering Balalaika's. Ultimately making the soundtrack a completely original moment for a Hollywood comedy and one that would ultimately win him an Academy Award for Best Original Score.