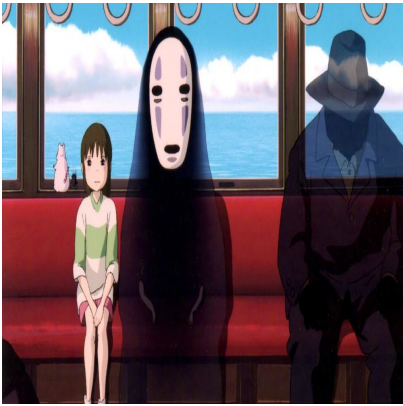




Top Scores #5: Joe Hisaishi & Spirited Away

Description



This week we are moving away from live action films and delving into the magical world of Japanese anime. Even those not intimately familiar with the genre will know the famed director Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli. While 2005's 'Howl's Moving Castle' is perhaps his most renowned work, it is 2003's equally lauded 'Spirited Away' that arguably provides the most memorable soundtrack.

Composed by Miyazaki's long time musical collaborator Joe Hisaishi the OST is a blend of minimalist western classical music and the distinct sounds of Japanese classical. Performed by the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra soundtrack picked up a host of awards including at the 56th

Mainichi Film Competition Award for Best Music, the Tokyo International Anime Fair 2001 Best Music Award in the Theater Movie category, and the 17th Japan Gold Disk Award for Animation Album of the Year.

The music itself weaves passages of minimal, sentimental piano pieces (Sixth Stop) big, uplifting ballads (The Name of Life) and frantic, eastern string orchestrations (Dragon Boy). What really makes the soundtrack special is the way it transitions so effortlessly between the contrasting moods of the film, while still retaining a distinct stylistic cohesion. It is at once triumphant and uplifting, melancholic and tragic, mystical and fantastical and sometimes just plain unsettling. Films like Spirited Away show the levels of depth a great score can add to a story.