

Gladiator essay sample



Potent and exhilarating, the film 'Gladiator' tells the story of a man who is attempting to gain his freedom back. 'Gladiator' is a heart-warming and compelling film. In the opening scene, Maximus, who is leading the Roman Army, escorts his army into battle. I will be analysing: Camera angles, sound and lighting, to see what affect these have on the audience. In the opening scene we see a lot of emotion yet a lot of violence between the Roman army and the Barbarian tribe.

Maximus gives a very over-whelming speech to his troops, which to me gets them through the battle. The Writing', which tells us background information on the film, forms the opening sequence of 'Gladiator'. The director uses a zoom, to gain the audiences attention. A zoom is used because it makes the audience focus on the screen and nothing else. The director wants you to know the background to the film. The music used in the opening scene is very magical and peaceful, it is not too overpowering, and so you don't focus on the music, you focus on the writing that is being projected onto the screen. The colours used are; orange, black, red and gold. All of these colours symbolise something.

For example the gold represents the wealth of the Roman army, and the red represents danger, as if it is telling the audience to be prepared for the battle scene that is arising. All these help to create a sense of evil impending on the film, in the next few scenes. Deep in thought, we see Maximus walking through a cornfield, brushing his hand over the tops of the corn heads. The director wanted us to see his wedding ring, and wanted us to hear the sounds of the children playing in the background, because it shows

the audience that he is very committed to his family and that he isn't the kind of person you would expect to see in a battle.

The music used, is very slow so that it ties in with Maximus's hand gliding over the corn, also it ties in with the pace of the camera, as you wouldn't hear fast music to a slow camera, and vice versa. The yellow and the green used in this scene are very calming colours, this helps to compose the audience before the big battle. The natural theme continues in the next cut, with a robin sitting on a branch. It then fly's away, this indicates that Maximus wants to fly away and leave behind the battle and join his wife and children, back at his home.

The red on the robin gives us a sense of danger before we enter the battle. The drumming of the music, whilst it gets louder, to me signifies that the battle is about to begin, and it is getting the audience's adrenaline pumping. Selective sound is used to draw attention to the soldiers and the horses. There is a close up of Maximus, as he is the main character, so we need to know who he is. There is also a low angle shot of Ceaser to show his importance, also the colours that he is wearing, which were gold and blue, showed a symbol of royalty.

The colours used in the opening battle scene are very grey and gloomy. This represents the mood, also the colours are very dark and there is a lot of fire, which could represent hell. All of these build up the audience for the big battle scene. The next scene, which uses a lot of interesting camera angles, carries on the effect of building up tension on the audience. There is a close up of Maximus's dog, which to me, shows that the dog senses fear, and

knows that something is going to happen. Also the camera kept flicking from the dog to Maximus, which shows the relationship they have with each other.

When the Barbarians enter, there is a low angle shot of a man who is holding a head in his hand, and drops it on the floor so it rolls and lands in front of the Roman army. This shows that the Barbarians are very serious about fighting this battle and that they are very vicious because they have just cut somebody's head off. As Maximus is getting ready to go to battle, he and his soldiers are galloping through the forest, the music gets louder, so it is going at the same pace as the horse's hooves on the floor.

When they stop, which is at the edge of the forest, Maximus gives a very touching speech to his soldiers, one line that he says " Three weeks from now I will be harvesting my crops, imagine where you will be, and it will be so", he is basically saying to his soldiers, you will not die and you have got to have faith in yourself. He is reassuring them, and is making sure that before they go into battle, they are a team, and will fight together. He is also reassuring the audience, and calming them before they enter the battle.

Whilst Maximus is talking, you can still hear the music and the noise of the opposition but not as loud as you could before, because it doesn't want to overpower what Maximus is saying too much. The horses that are used in this scene are white, which represents their innocence, and that they have done nothing wrong and they don't deserve to be in the middle of a battlefield. The orange used represents hell, and the line of fire in front of the archer's, looks as if it has been used as a barrier to separate the Roman army from the Barbarians.

All these make the audience wonder what is going to happen which makes them want to carry on watching the film. As the battle is starting, the camera shots are very jumpy to show the pace of the battle and how quickly it is going. A point of view shot is used to make the audience feel as though they are on the battlefield, and it lets the audience see what is happening, through somebody else's eyes. The pace of the music picks up, so it links in with the camera's fast pace. We can hear the sound of arrows and the sound of trees bursting into flame.

It almost sounds like somebody is lighting a match. This is called Selective Sound and the director wants us to hear these sounds. The colours used represent a lot of things, for example, all the men's faces are in darkness, which could symbolise that they all have an evil side to them that no-body knows about, also when Maximus is fighting he is lit up so everybody knows who is the main character and also he is the person to watch. This makes the audience wonder what is going to happen, and they don't know whether Maximus is going to die or not.

This helps the audience engage in the film, and also makes them feel as though they are on the battle field, and makes them feel more connected to the film. As the battle is ending, which is in slow motion, there is a low angle shot of Caesar to again show his importance but also for the audience to see that he is still there and he has not been killed in the battle. The music helps the audience be peaceful after what has just occurred. Whilst the calm music is being played you can hear the sound of swords being driven into people and the sound of Maximus breathing.

This helps the audience imagine that Maximus has been fighting very hard and now he just wants to give up. The colours used are; white, blue and grey, they all represent cold and they are colours that make you feel very dull. These are used because no-body wants to be there. All of these; the music, and lighting make us feel very sympathetic for the soldiers. Also when the battle has finished, Maximus shouts to his soldiers “ Roma Victor” and all his soldiers repeat back to him, to show they are a team and they are still supporting each other.

Gladiator’ was shot in three major locations between January through to May in 1999. The opening battle scenes in the forests of Germania were shot over three weeks in Bourne Woods, near Farnham, Surrey in England.

Subsequently, the scenes of slavery, desert travel, and gladiatorial training school were shot in Ouarzazante, Morocco just south of the Atlas Mountains for a total of three weeks. Finally, the scenes of Ancient Rome were shot over a period of nineteen weeks in Malta using a multicultural workforce whose talents were stretched to the limits.

A replica of about one-third of Rome’s Collesseum was built in Malta to a height of 52 feet (15. 8 metres), mostly from plaster and plywood the other two-thirds and remaining height were added digitally. The replica took several months to build and cost an estimated \$1 million. The reverse side of the complex supplied a rich assortment of Ancient Roman street furniture, collonnades, gates, statuary, and marketplaces for other filming requirments.

The complex was serviced by tented “ costume villages” that had changing rooms, storage, armorers, and other facilities. The rest of the Collesseum was created in CG (computer generated) using set-design blueprints, textures referenced from live action, and rendered in three layers to provide lighting flexibility for composting in flame and inferno. The Oscar-nominated score was composed by Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard, and conducted by Gavin Greenaway. Lisa Gerrard’s vocals are similar to her own work on ‘ The Insider’ score.

The music for many of the battle scenes has been noted as similar to Gustav Holst’s Mars: “ The bringer of War”, and in June 2006, the Holst foundation sued Hans Zimmer for allegedly copying the late Gustav Holst’s work. Another close musical resemblance occurs in the scene of Commodus’s triumphal entry into Rome, accompanied by music clearly evocative of two sections – the Prelude to Das Rheingold and Siegfried’s Funeral March from Gi?? tterdi?? mmerung – from Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelungs.

On February 27th, 2001, nearly a year after the first soundtrack’s release, Decca produced *Gladiator: More Music from the Motion Picture*. Then on September 5th, 2005, Decca produced *Gladiator: Special Anniversary Edition*, a two-CD pack containing both the above-mentioned releases. Some of the music from the film featured in the NFL playoffs in January 2003 before commercial breaks and before and after half time. In 2003, Luciano Pavorotti released a recording of him singing a song from the movie and said he regretted turning down an offer to perform on the soundtrack.

Critics thought that ‘Gladiator’ was a “spellbinding historical drama from director Ridley Scott, long overdue a return to the kind of film which engages the senses and the mind and lingers in the memory” and “A sprawling epic set ablaze by massive sets, genuine authenticity, awesome battle sequences and yes, even a good old fashioned story dipped in love, power and revenge”. ‘Gladiator’ got very good reviews from Critics. It seems that film, touched a lot of people, in many different ways.

Special effects in movies have become increasingly wedded to science fiction, but in the glorious spectacle ‘Gladiator’, director Ridley Scott uses this technology to re-create – with a startling physicality and immediacy – the Roman Empire that once blanketed most of Europe”, “‘Gladiator’ puts its audience through a digitised, derivative DeMille, but compensates with remarkable performances (including, sadly, the last one by Oliver Reed)” In this essay I have been looking at the opening scenes of ‘Gladiator’ and what effects the scenes have on the audience.

I was also looking at how realistic and shocking the scenes are especially the battle scene. Therefore I have taken everything into consideration, including camera angles, lighting and sound, and realised that all of these make the audience hooked on the film and all throughout watching it, they never know what is going to happen next. It leaves them wanting to know more. I would definitely watch the rest of ‘Gladiator’. Just after watching the first few scenes, I was hooked, and I wanted to know what was going to happen in the middle, and what kind of ending the audience would want to see.

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