

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers
Original Score Composed by Howard Shore

Composer Howard Shore's score to *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* introduced audiences to J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth and its resident cultures. In the saga's second chapter, *The Two Towers*, the world has darkened, cloaked beneath the advancing shadow of Mordor and the threat of the evil One Ring.

The Two Towers opens with the Fellowship of the Ring broken three ways. Yet even as the band is pulled apart, Middle-earth's cultures begin drawing together. So begins the gradual commingling of civilizations, as the free people of Middle-earth respond to the growing power of Mordor. *The Two Towers'* score presents a more complex musical world than *The Fellowship of the Ring*. "*The Fellowship of the Ring* ends with the breaking of the Fellowship," says Shore. "*The Two Towers* follows the fragments—the shards of the Fellowship. Three distinct stories are being told linearly now."

In *The Two Towers* Shore develops the themes introduced in *The Fellowship of the Ring* and debuts figures for new cultures and characters—but it is the strengthening relationships within the amassed material that illustrates the increasingly entangled plight of Middle-earth. The Shire's themes, for example, are carried by Merry and Pippin into Fangorn Forest, where they mix with the austere music of the tree-herding Ents. The Ents relate to the cleansing waves of the Nature's Reclamation theme, the purity of which is embodied in the voice of a boy soprano—the same vocal sound with which the Seduction of the Ring lures its victims. The One Ring's principle motif, the History of the Ring, mixes with the Pity of Gollum as the wretched, obsessive creature leads Sam and Frodo—and his Precious—ever closer to Mordor. Sauron's arsenal of material looms on the horizon, flaring and rearing up behind the blunt pestle of the Isengard music, which sprawls across Middle-earth's plains, assailing the new Rohan Fanfare. The nobly braided Rohan music, in turn, finds an impressive ally: the Fellowship theme, now representing a reduced coalition of Man, Elf, Dwarf and Wizard. And so the connections continue, worlds of musical material circling and intertwining to create a vast ring of related themes. Across the grey slopes of Middle-earth, dusk deepens...

-Doug Adams

Doug Adams is a Chicago-based musician and writer. He is the author of the book *The Music of the Lord of the Rings Films*.