

SEASON 6 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK



SONGS BY DANIEL INGRAM

SCORE BY WILLIAM ANDERSON



Annotated Score for the Season 6 soundtrack of
My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic

To compliment the Season 6 song, instrumental,
and BGM rip collection by RainShadow

Get the full soundtrack at <http://www.youtube.com/RainShadow>

SOUNDTRACK OUTLINE



Disc 1

Songs

Disc 2

The complete Season 6 score

Disc 3

Song karaoke versions (w/ backing vocals or chorus) Instrumentals

* Discs 1 & 3 are grouped in one download, and Disc 2 separately

SEASON 6 OVERVIEW

With the start of this season, Hasbro and the MLP team seem to have arrived at a nice regular production schedule for the show, with Season 6 following 5's pattern. However, the shorter hiatus did not mean the season was short on content!

The sixth season of My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic kicks off continuing where five left off: with Twilight Sparkle's new protégé, Starlight Glimmer. Throughout the season we follow her on a journey to better understand friendship, and learn from her new friends. Season 6's overarching plot was much more complex than past seasons, with the arc's key episodes not as apparent until they come together in the grand finale.

Starlight's episode aren't the only theme of the season, however. "Exploring Equestria" is the season's official motif, and throughout we visit both new areas, and further explore old ones, from Manehattan to Las Pegasus. The Cutie Map, while absent for the season's start, is brought back by Twilight and Starlight later on, and continues its task of pairing two of the Mane 6 together to solve a friendship problem somewhere in Equestria.

Much like its predecessor, Season 6 relies on and masterfully utilizes the series' vast continuity to tell new stories. Right from the season opener, we continue building upon Shining Armor and Princess Cadance with the birth of their first child, Princess Flurry Heart: a baby alicorn! As the season continues, we touch upon other characters and events from the series' past, including the Changelings, Queen Chrysalis, Nightmare Night, and Trixie just to name a few. Much of the show's continuity cumulates in the season finale as a unlikely group of side-characters take on the Chrysalis and the Changelings.

Change continued to be present on the other side of the 4th wall as well. Josh Haber, a staple writer for the series since season 4, took the reins of the show as Story Editor, replacing Meghan and M.A. Larson. M.A. Larson departed the series once again, along with Amy Keating Rogers. Rebecca Dart, art director for Season 5 left to work that position on the movie, allowing

Kora Kosicka to take over that role. The show doubled-down on bring in new writing talent; half of the new episodes were penned by writers new to the show, while about 70% were by writers who had been around only since Season 5. The only writer from before season 4 was Dave Polsky. Of note, Michael Vogel played a large part in the writing of this season, penning six episodes, and helping with story for an additional three.

Music-wise the show continued to excel at exploring new territories and genres, both in songs and score. The season was slightly lighter on songs compared to previous romps, with only twelve. However, quality over quantity, as the always say; this season delivered a large number of memorable ones, including arguably the best musical episode of the show yet. William Anderson, on the other hand, kicked the score up a notch once again this season, leading to a record 310 tracks total. This season brought a wide-variety of musical stylings, from country, to Broadway, to Indian, to Mario Kart, to an outrageous amount of jazz in both the songs and score.

William Anderson and Kelly Davidson continue to grace us with some of the best score on television. From the reworking of Starlight's motif into a more friendly, albeit unsure version, to the beautiful and epic scores of "Gauntlet of Fire" and "To Where and Back Again," to the more emotional cues of "No Second Prances." We also revisit motifs from much earlier seasons, as both the Crystal Empire and Queen Chrysalis bring back their classic score. This also was the season of montages, with numerous episodes featuring them and their accompanying score.

There's so much more to cover, so with out further ado, here is the complete My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic, Season 6 Soundtrack!

THE CRYSTALLING

The Crystalling was quite a different two-parter than we are used to seeing, having two simultaneous storylines which collided in the end. Twilight Sparkling and friends head to the Crystal Empire once again to attend the Crystalling of Princess Cadance and Shining Armor's new foal, Flurry Heart. Twilight thinks this would be an excellent opportunity for her new pupil, Starlight Glimmer, to tag along and learn a friendship lesson. After learning that Starlight's old friend Sunburst was in the Crystal Empire, Twilight tasks her new student to seek him out and befriend him again. However, both Sunburst and baby Filly Heart are not what they seem.

This premiere was definitely a nice change of pace. While Twilight Sparkle and the Mane 6 were part of one story, the episode overall seemed to focus on Starlight Glimmer, not Princess Twilight for once. This is even more apparent by Starlight receiving top billing during the voice credits. She also received some fantastic characterization, along with Sunburst.

Score

William Anderson and Kelly Davidson's score throughout this episode is fantastic, drawing both on old and new melodies to drive the episode along. We hear reprises of a new version of Starlight Glimmer's motif, along with numerous season 5 score, as well as some themes from season 3's premiere "The Crystal Empire." At 25 tracks, this ties last season's record for most score rips from a single episode (w/ two parters grouped together.) In addition, this is the first two-parter in which the music for the first part's credits is replaced with a custom score, along with part 2.

The season 6 premiere begins with a short drop of the "Princess Twilight Sparkle" motif, which has been used numerous times since the season 4 premiere of the same name. This leads us to a


nice little staccato string piece during Starlight and Twilight Sparkle's dialogue.

"Trip Planning" begins with the first of many reprises of Starlight Glimmer's motif. However, you'll notice a major change to the melody in this episode vs its season 5 counterpart.

William Anderson has made some modifications to the melody for post-reformation Starlight. It's slightly more upbeat, if not a tad unsure. This change melds nicely with the changes in her character, motivations, and appearance compared to when we last saw her. This new motif for Starlight will continue to appear throughout the episode, including an extended version in "The Three Options" and "Starlight Glimmer."

"Crystallizing History" brings us another beautiful and grand piece of score to back more world and history building for the Crystal Empire and the show. In "When We Were Foals..." Starlight provides Spike, as well as us, another glimpse of her past with Sunburst. For this scene, the score from Starlight's similar flashback scene in "The Cutie Re-Mark" in the track "Starlight and Sunburst" makes a second appearance. "The Magic of Friendship" motif also makes a short, varied appearance at the end of the track.

In "The Baby" we hear the first of Flurry Heart's upbeat piano motif. The score shifts to a short orchestral-driven part as Princess Luna talks, before returning to the wild music for the baby. As Princess Celestia begins to speak, a cue is used which has appeared for her multiple times since season 3. It was first heard as a beautiful part of the track "Passing the Test" in the season 3 premiere "The Crystal Empire, part 2." Its reuse is very fitting here, as that scene not only took place in the original episode about the Crystal Empire and the Crystal Heart, but also involved Celestia delivering a small speech to Twilight. The melody of the theme itself bears a resemblance to the Season 2 theme, which appeared throughout that season, most noticeably in the credits of its opener and finale. The motif appeared next in the season 4 premiere "Princess Twilight Sparkle" in the track "Saving Twilight & The Tree" as Celestia and Luna are released from the vine's grasp, and as she is talking to Twilight afterward. It makes a slightly altered appearance in the finale "Twilight's Kingdom" as Twilight is talking to Celestia about finding her purpose in the track "The Princess of Friendship." The cue makes another appearance with a more action-driven feel in part two in the track "The Frozen North."

A background image featuring several My Little Pony characters in a snowy, mountainous landscape. In the foreground, a purple pony with glasses (likely Twilight Sparkle) is visible. Behind her, a pink pony (Pinkie Pie) and a dark grey pony (Shining Armor) are partially visible. The scene is set in a snowy environment with mountains in the background.


In the track named after him, as Sunburst begins to lie about being a very important wizard, the score resembles one of the themes from episode 100, "A Slice of Life." This theme was used in that episode for Doctor Hooves in the track "Derpy and the Doctor." This semi-wacky cue appears a few times in "The Crystalling" for Sunburst whenever he is faking being a VIW.

The episode's score takes a turn towards more action and tension at the first part's end, as the Crystal Heart breaks, and an unstoppable snowstorm is unleashed. During part one's credits, Flurry Heart's motif makes another appearance, marking the first time a part 1 of two part episode has featured custom credits score.

Part 2 begins with a tonal-shift in much of the score, featuring a more serious mood. The track starts with a short reprise of one of the series' oldest motifs, one which isn't used much anymore. This was the main themes from Season 2 (the "Return of Harmony" motif), and while it appeared numerous times during that season, it is most notable for appearing as the credits theme for both that season's premiere and finale. Here, the motif is once again reused in a more somber and sinister way. As the princesses discuss the impending storm, a theme is reprised which made its first appearance in season 3's "Magic Duel" in the track "It's Time For You To Leave Ponyville... FOREVER!" as Twilight is first dueling with Trixie.

"Revelations" begins with a great piece of somber score as Sunburst admits that he's not the all-powerful wizard that Starlight thinks. This track features wonderful chord progression at the beginning. After Sunburst and Starlight's outbursts, they begin to reconcile. As Sunburst is talking, the "Starlight and Sunburst" motif from the season 5 finale (and earlier in this episode) reappears.

"The Crystaller" features the score from the epic conclusion of the two parter, and the longest track from the two episodes. It begins with some wonderful little piano arpeggios in the background while Sunburst talks. As Shining Armor tells Sunburst that he wants him as the baby's Crystaller, a nice clarinet melody is played. The group then runs to their locations to prepare to use the spells, and a short drop of a string-driven piece from season 4's finale "Twilight's Kingdom" in the track "Friendship is the Key" is reprised. The motif was used in that episode after Twilight receives her key from Discord, and the group there runs to the box



to unlock it. As the spells take their effect and reconstruct the heart, score from the end of season 3's premiere "The Crystal Empire" is utilized. In that episode, it was heard as the Crystal Heart was being returned to its place in the Crystal Empire, restoring its power and banishing King Sombra. Its reuse here is fitting, as they are also returning the Heart to its place, and banishing the impending snowstorm.

"More of a Wizard / Teacher Than You Think" begins with one final reprise of Starlight's fantastic new motif as she talks to Sunburst about the fantastic job he has done. After this, another theme is reprised: a piano-driven score first was used in season 4's "For Whom the Sweetie Belle Toils" in the track "It Came to Me... In A Dream," and appeared again in season 5's "Canterlot Boutique."

As Starlight and Sunburst say their goodbyes, we hear a string piece which first appeared in the season 4 finale "Twilight's Kingdom" in the track "Friendship is the Key." It appeared there as Twilight received her key from Discord, after teaching him a lesson about friendship. Its reuse is fitting here in that sense, and she has just taught Starlight a lesson about friendship as well. The theme has appeared additional times since season 4: in the season 5 premiere in the track "The Call of the Cutie" and "The Lost Treasure of Griffonstone's" "Friendship is Griffonstone."

The track, and episode, ends with a beautiful new piece of score filled with woodwinds, strings, and glockenspiel. This small motif mixes in a little bit of Starlight's new motif as well, marking a fantastic musical conclusion for a fantastic episode, and will be heard in later episodes this season.

The credits to part 2 features the Crystal Empire restoration score which was heard earlier in the episode, as well as previously in season 3's "The Crystal Empire."

THE GIFT OF THE MAUD PIE

Maud Pie returns! Everyone's favorite rock-type Pony meets up with Rarity and Pinkie Pie in Manehattan for their annual Pie Sisters' Surprise Swap Day. Besides more Maud antics, this episode is packed with humor, references, callbacks, and sisterly bonding, with an emotional finish. Expect all of the series' Manehattan motifs to make reappearances throughout the episode, and a few new tracks as well.

Score

"The Gift of Maud Pie" begins with a nice, short little piano motif, followed by some Pinkie Pie antics. As Rarity and Pinkie Pie enter Manehattan, we are greeted with our first motif for the city: the main Manehattan theme. This piano and horn piece is usually utilized for the wide shots of the city as the ponies are entering. It has made an appearance in each episode involving the city thus far.

The second track, "Pie Sisters' Surprise Swap Day" brings us the second Manehattan-based motif from the series. This string piece, with piano embellishments, usually represents the streets of the city, bringing to life its traffic and commotion. It has also appeared in the previous Manehattan episodes, beginning with "Rarity Takes Manehattan." This cue is expanded upon in the next track "Manhattan Tour," before transitioning to the third Manehattan motif, "City Dreams." This cue also appears during this episode's credits.

In "Shopping for Maud," we see, and hear two ponies playing the My Little Pony brand theme, before being interrupted by Pinkie Pie. "The Right Price" offers some fantastic new jazz score for the sleazy Manehattan pony who offers to trade Pinkie the pouch for her party canon, while "All That Really Matters" features a somber melody for Pinkie that was first heard all the way back in season 3's "Too Many Pinkie Pies" in the track "Pinkie's Plan."

While not technically a song, this episode does feature a short Pinkie Pie singing number in "The Pie Sisters' Swap Day Song."

"Present Swap" concludes with a beautiful orchestration of one of Pinkie Pie's main lesson motifs, which was last used in the season 5 episode "Party Pooped" in the track "Secret Party Planning Cave."

The title track for the episode begins fittingly with a theme from the season 4 episode "Maud Pie" at the end of the track "Maud Saves Pinkie." Its reuse here is notable as both moments mark bonding between the two Pie sisters in an emotional way.

We then move on to a final reprise of the main Manehattan theme from the beginning of the episode, before we move into a new piece of score to mark Rarity's inclusion in the Pie's tradition.



ON YOUR MARKS

Four episodes into season 6 and it is already time to tackle the Cutie Mark Crusaders and where they go post-Cutie Marks! This marks one of the first, if not the first episodes where none of the Mane 6 appear at all. What starts out as a CMC episode quickly turns into a character episode for Apple Bloom, which has repercussions for the entire group. The score to "On Your Marks" offers quite a bit of new pieces, including awesome callbacks to some of the classic Season 1 CMC music. Plus, some great new tango and jazz music for the dancing scenes. And, of course, we also have our first song of the season, "On My Own" an amazing Apple Bloom solo country song.

Score

The episode begins with a reprised CMC theme which has appeared in a few of their episodes. It has that classic instrumentation for the trio, consisting of guitars, synth, and drums, which we'll hear more of in the new original score in "The Next Crusade." It's been quite a while since we've had some crusading music in the series. This track is a direct throwback to the classic "Crusaders Go Crusading" score from Season 1's "The Show Stoppers." It's complete with plenty of guitars, synth, and drums: an instrumentation we don't hear that often in the show anymore, but was more prevalent in the its first season. Being that the scene is mirroring that scene from Season 1, with the Crusaders now crusading for other ponies with cutie mark problems, the musical callback here is perfect. Speaking of older CMC score, "Scootin'" features some rockin' electric guitar music for Scootaloo.

"Partnered Routine" starts off with a little theme for the dance studio, and then transitions into a tango for Apple Bloom's dancing. This tango cue was last used in season 4's "Simple Ways" during the "Applejewel" track near the end of the episode.

"Tender Taps" opens up with the dance instructor's dance motif score which appeared when

Apple Bloom first encountered the studio earlier in the episode. From there, as Apple Bloom exits the studio and is followed by Tender Taps, we hear his motif for the first time. This is a really beautiful new piece of score for the series, which will appear again for Tender Taps later in the episode as well. As Apple Bloom walks away at the end of this scene, we hear a sad theme which has appeared in the series multiple times before, first in season 3's "Games Ponies Play," and again in many other episodes including "Rainbow Falls," "The Hooffields and McColts," and most recently in the season 5 finale in the track "The Friendship Connection."

As Apple Bloom realizes the mistake she made in "I Looked All Over Town!," the new, emotional lesson motif which last appeared at the end of the Season 6 premiere in the track "More of a Wizard / Teacher Than You Think" is used.

"Here Goes Nuthin'" features the score for the final dance number with Tender Taps, which has an awesome, jazzy tune, with wonderful supporting baritone saxophone, percussion, and muted trumpet. This score is also featured in this episode's credits.

The episode concludes with "The New Crusaders," which features a gorgeous theme that was first used in the Season 4 episode "Testing, 1... 2... 3..." during the track "Learning Differently." It appeared again in Season 4's "Equestria Games" and in Season 5's "Princess Spike," also at the end of those episodes.

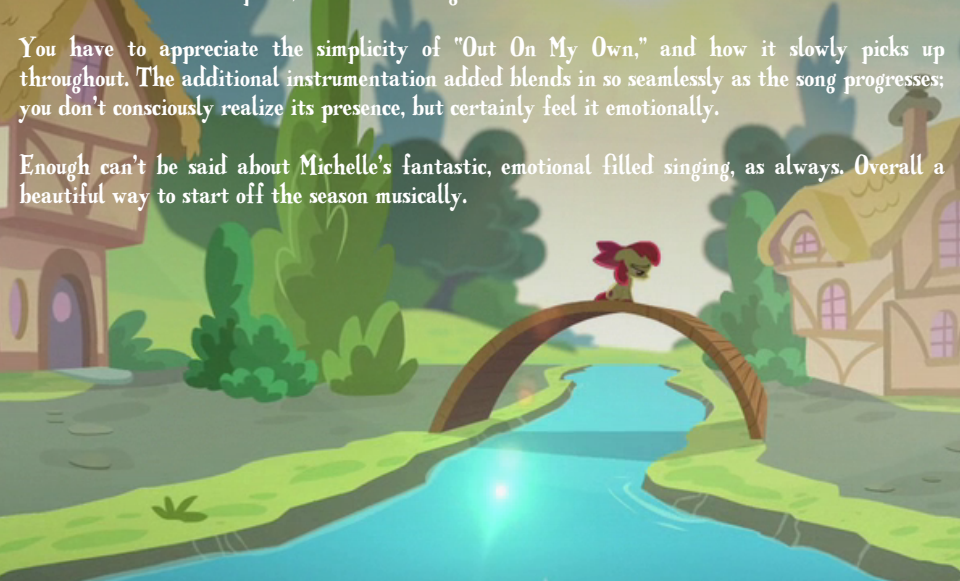


"Out On My Own"

Four episodes in and we have our first song of the season, a stunningly beautiful Apple Bloom solo (a first for the filly). "On My Own" unsurprisingly is a slow and deliberately paced country tune with some musical theater influences. While we've certainly had some country songs in the series before, they've up to this point been more upbeat. It's great having the season start out with another different type of song for the series. The song begins very simply, with just Michelle Creber's wonderful vocals and some guitar. As we arrive at the first chorus, some soft, subtle strings are added in, along with beautiful harmonies to Apple Bloom's vocals. A second verse comes next, with additional woodwinds added in on top, as well as harp. The song continues to slowly pick up pace as we reach the second and final chorus with it's full instrumentation now in place, before the solo guitar leads us to it's conclusion.

You have to appreciate the simplicity of "Out On My Own," and how it slowly picks up throughout. The additional instrumentation added blends in so seamlessly as the song progresses; you don't consciously realize its presence, but certainly feel it emotionally.

Enough can't be said about Michelle's fantastic, emotional filled singing, as always. Overall a beautiful way to start off the season musically.



"OUT ON MY OWN"

I never imagined myself out on my own
Tryin' to find out what's next for me
The Cutie Mark Crusaders have always
 been my home
Maybe now there's more that I could be

I guess as time goes by
Everypony has to go out on their own
And maybe someday I'll have to try
Somethin' new that's just for me
A little somethin' that could be
Just my own and I won't feel so left
 behind

We used to say that we'd be always side
 by side
Maybe things are changin' and this
 could mean goodbye
I always thought our friendship was all
 I'd ever need
We've always been crusadin' - what else
 is there for me?

I guess as time goes by
Everypony has to go out on their own
And maybe someday I'll have to try
Somethin' new that's just for me
A little somethin' that could be
Just my own and I won't feel so left
 behind



GAUNTLET OF FIRE

Episode five of season six brings us our first Spike episode of the season, and the return of the Dragons. Spike must respond to the Dragon Lord's call, and winds up getting caught up in the competition to become the new Dragon Lord in order to save Ponyville.

The amazing score complements this awesome Spike episode. While overused, "epic" is the perfect word to describe its music. From many new expansive themes, to reworks of classics, "Gauntlet of Fire's" score has a lot to offer. Plus, the episode has the most intense credits ever.

Score

The episode starts with the princesses conversing, and an airy new horn piece, who's start bears similarity to Princess Twilight Sparkle's theme. Rarity and Spike enter the scene, and some frantic, yet magical arpeggios are utilized on strings and synth. This cue then changes into a more epic horn and string piece as the princesses discuss the Dragon Lord's call. This type of score will accompany us throughout the episode as we visit the Dragons and the Dragon Lord themselves. When group arrives at the Dragon Lord, he is accompanied by his grand and jarring score for the episode. This track is filled with plenty of blaring horns and bells. As the scene nears its end, a small drop of Princess Ember's theme is utilized as she appears on screen; this is a motif we'll hear a few more times for her throughout the episode, including her title track.

"To the Heart of the Flamecano" heavily features the episode's main action motif, which is also the score used over its credits. This piece has ample blaring brass hits, with heavy drums, and a great light bell hit bridge. "The Embers of Friendship" features one of the beautiful conclusion motifs; its composition and instrumentation here is unique to this episode. Usually this cue is very string heavy; however, here it is driven more by woodwinds, piano, and some guitar. This allows it to fit in more with the episode's other score, especially Ember's motif.

No SECOND PRANCES

She's back! After a two-season absence for touring, Trixie returns to MLP, and Twilight is horrified to learn that she's made friends with her new pupil.

This episode is more character-heavy, so not quite as much score as some of the previous. However, it does feature plenty of Trixie's motif from all the way back in her episode at the beginning of season 1, and some fun ragtime score.

Score

After the episode's beginning, Starlight heads to the spa to relax. For this scene, some nice, soothing new score is featured. The instrumentation and overall feel of this is reminiscent of the course selection music from Super Mario Galaxy. It's a really enjoyable mix of bells, strings, and piano. Trixie's title track reprises Trixie's motif from all the way back in Season 1, Episode 6. The instrumentation from her past two episodes is also reprised throughout this one, with plenty of accordion, strings, and dulcimer.

In an episode about friendship, you're bound to hear at least one drop of the classic "Magic of Friendship" motif, and this episode is no disappointment, with a brief version of it in "I Trust You." Of note is that the first episode which this motif appeared in was, in fact, Season 3's "Magic Duel," Trixie's previous appearance!

The episode's title track is its emotional center, and begins with Trixie's motif, before Twilight takes the score to an angrier place. As Trixie becomes more emotional, her theme builds with her. From there, the score takes a somber turn as Starlight feels rejected.

"No Second Prances" also features a classic piano rag, in the same vein as famous one such as the "Maple Leaf Rag," in its credits.

NEWBiE DASH

Six seasons in, and another one of the Mane 6 has realized one of their lifelong dreams! That's right: Rainbow Dash is officially a Wonderbolt! ...But will she be able to handle her new status, and her ego?

Expect to hear the Wonderbolts' motif throughout the episode, as well as other pieces of score we've heard in previous episodes featuring the dynamic flyers. Airy, triumphant horns abound in this episode's score, balanced out by some returning emotional pieces later on. Of note, this is the first episode of the season which utilizes the standard My Little Pony credits theme, versus a custom track of score.

Score

The episode begins with a small, upbeat new piece of score as she flies through Ponyville. As Spitfire and the Wonderbolts enter the scene, we're greeted with the first drop of their motif, this time with additional snare drum. This is the group's main theme, and has been utilized since season 3's "Wonderbolts Academy." As Rainbow Dash smiles with glee, a triumphant version of the theme is utilized.

"Rule 1" begins with more of that previous cue. As Dash is eyeing General Flash's cap, the Wonderbolts March, another one of the group's reoccurring themes, makes an appearance. This particular motif was first utilized in season 3's "Wonderbolts Academy." As Rainbow Dash participates in her first drill of the routine in "The First Practice," some awesome new orchestra and guitar-filled score, which is based on the Wonderbolt's main motif, is heard.

"The Wonderbolts Air Show" features the backing track to the Wonderbolts' flying routine. It utilizes the Wonderbolt's theme, as well as their routine motif. This extended theme last

appeared in the season 4 episode "Rainbow Falls" in the track "The Choice / The Race" when Rainbow Dash and the Ponyville team were competing in the aerial relay. The version here, much like at the beginning of the episode, has additional snare drum for a more pronounced upbeat tempo.

This episode's conclusion begins in "A Stand-Out Flyer" with a simple march for Spitfire. As Rainbow Dash apologizes, a melancholy piece of score which we've heard in the series before is used. As the Wonderbolts reassure her, a short reprise of their motif appears again.

As we transition to night in "I'm a Wonderbolt!'", a cue from the Season 4 finale, "Twilight's Kingdom" is used. This made its previous appearance in the track "Your Time Will Come" in that episode (oddly enough during a pan-up to the moon, just like in this episode). The epilogue of the episode features one of the season's new ending motifs. This particular one was first heard at the end of the season premiere in the track "More of a Wizard / Teacher Than Your Think."

The episode closes out on one last triumphant hit of the Wonderbolts motif for their new member.



A HEARTH'S WARMING TAIL



My Little Pony takes on the classic Charles Dickens' tale "A Christmas Carol," with Starlight Glimmer filling the shoes of "bah, humbug" himself, Ebenezer Scrooge. Producer-turn-writer Michael Vogel pulls out all the stops with this one, as it is this season's musical episode.

Prepare for six amazing holiday-themed songs from Daniel Ingram, plus some fantastic backing score from him and orchestrator Caleb Chan, as they take over for William Anderson (as with all musical episodes). Not only is this a lovely, abridged retelling of the classic story, it nicely mirrors Starlight's own past. Plus, there's solo songs by Pinkie, Applejack, and Luna; the last two of whom receive their first full solo number.

The songs and story intertwine nicely, and deliver one of the most enjoyable My Little Pony episodes to date. As with all of the MLP musical episodes, Ingram and Chan weave the orchestrations for the songs into the backing score between them, allowing for a seamless experience musically. This leads to almost 20 minutes of uninterrupted music for "A Hearth's Warming Tail!"

Score

"A Hearth's Warming Eve's" score begins with an instrumental reprise of the first song, "Hearth's Warming Is Here Once Again." As with all of the series' musical episode, Daniel Ingram and Caleb Chan take over the score-writing duties from William Anderson. Due to the number of songs crammed closely together within the episode, this allows them to utilize motifs from the songs in the score, and make the episode all flow together seamlessly. You'll notice a lot of the episode's score flowing directly into the song.

"Snowfall Frost" begins with another instrumental reprise of the "Hearth's Warming Eve is Here Once Again" melody as Twilight tells Starlight about the story, "A Hearth's Warming Tail." The melody continues as we enter the world of the story, but with more harpsichord for the change in era. We enter Snowfall's abode, and the score changes to match with that of her upcoming musical number, "Say Goodbye to the Holiday." Her instrumentation uses plenty of strings and harpsichord. As Snow Dash talks about the positives of Hearth's Warming, another reprise of the "Hearth's Warming Eve Is Here to Stay" melody makes an appearance.

We return from Spike's break with another small drop of "Hearth's Warming Eve is Here Once Again's" melody. "Snowfall's Present" begins with a slower instrumental version of the previous song, "Pinkie's Present." Princess Luna, playing the Spirit of Hearth's Warming Yet to Come makes her appearance next in an ominous track leading into her song.

The story's end... begins... with another instrumental reprise of "Pinkie's Present." As Snowfall begins to tell the others what she's learned, the melody of the beginning of the next song, the reprise of "Hearth's Warming Eve Is Here Once Again" is foreshadowed. As Twilight finishes reading Starlight the story, a short, final instrumental reprise of "Pinkie's Present" is played.

Hearth's Warming Eve is Here Once Again

As with the past three musical episodes of the series, we begin right away with our first musical number, "Hearth's Warming Eve Is Here Once Again!" This is a very "classic" sounding Christmas song, complete with plenty of full choir for the chorus. Each of the Mane 6 (minus Twilight) receive small solo parts during the verses, starting with a little duet with Rainbow Dash and Fluttershy. You've gotta love the annoyed singing from Rarity during her solo.

The backing score for the song also embodies typical Christmas carol instrumentation, with a full orchestra that features plenty of chimes and glockenspiel, woodwinds, strings, and well-placed brass. The lyrics have a very call-and-response feel to them, with the solo parts being followed by the choir. Overall, a very festive and upbeat way to begin the episode!



Say Goodbye to the Holiday

The second song of "A Hearth's Warming Tail" is an ominous and forbidding villain song sung by Starlight Glimmer. It's been quite a while since we've had one in the main series, and Ingram delivers here.

One of the best parts of this song are certainly Kelly Sheridan's fantastic vocals. Its nice hearing the "old" Starlight coming through in her character here. I love the amount of expression put into them throughout.

The orchestration matches well, with a mischievous, bouncy feel to it, complete with plenty of brass and string ensemble, and a sprinkle of glockenspiel to bring the holiday theme.



The Seeds of the Past (part 1 & 2)

Applejack is revealed to be playing the Spirit of Hearth's Warming Past for this story, and she guides us into Snowfall's days-gone-by with this fantastic Applejack solo song. It begins with a horn-driven holiday fanfare, before we arrive at the more country-driven number.

"The Seeds of the Past" moves gracefully between the banjo & guitar and more orchestral backing score. As we reach the second part, the orchestration moves more to the latter, with more woodwinds and strings added on top. The song concludes with an emotional part by Starlight, and a toned down backing of simple guitar and strings.

Ashleigh Ball's vocals are some of her best as Applejack here, hitting both the high and low notes perfectly in character.



Pinkie's Present

Pinkie Pie is revealed to be portraying the Spirit of Hearth's Warming Present. She delivers us the fourth song of the episode: a very upbeat, New Orleans-style, big band jazz number, complete with plenty of horns, saxophone, guitar, and piano.

This song itself marks several other events production-wise. First off, in addition to Caleb Chan's orchestration, Steffan Andrews returns to the series for the first time since Season 4 to help with the horn arrangement, along with Dave Corman. In a first for the series, the song was recorded with a live band at The Warehouse Studios, the same place where the previously released MLP Christmas Album was recorded. The additional quality of the live horns most certainly shows in the final product, and it's awesome that Daniel Ingram had the opportunity to record this song with them.

Shannon Chan-Kent's vocals for Pinkie are perfect, as always. It's fantastic hearing the pink pony sing again, as she hasn't had a solo song since her musical episode, "Pinkie Pride," all the way back in Season 4.



Luna's Future

This song is one of those that's on a whole other level for the series.

Luna finally receives a solo song, and this time her singing voice is provided by singer, and newcomer to the series, Aloma Steele. If you listen to some of her work on Soundcloud, she more or less IS Luna voice-wise, and it's amazing that they got her for this. She does a phenomenal job; one of the best performances of the series.

This very dark and foreboding number sounds like something out of an epic modern opera, and is somewhat reminiscent of some songs from "The Phantom of the Opera." The backing track starts out simple, with repeating strings and a drum marching beat, but quickly builds as the song progresses. Additional blaring horns are added in to build into the song's conclusion, helping the scene's stakes and emotion rise exponentially. The song itself ends with an extended instrumental part, as Snowfall has her change of heart about the holiday.

"Luna's Future" is most certainly one of the best, most epic songs of the series, with an amazing orchestration behind it and vocals in front. It all comes together for the perfect number for Luna's first solo.



Hearth's Warming Eve is Here Once Again (Reprise)

The holiday-themed episode concludes with one final song: a reprise of the opening number "Hearth's Warming Eve Is Here Once Again." We start with a different opening sung by Starlight Glimmer. This leads into a brass-heavy buildup to the shortened reprise, which has Starlight singing the lead, and the chorus responding.

A fantastic end to an episode filled with some spectacular music. Much applause to Daniel Ingram, Caleb Chan, Michael Vogel, and the rest of the crew for the amazing music in this season's musical!



"HEARTH'S WARMING EVE IS HERE ONCE AGAIN"

Ponies voices fill the night
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

Happy hearts so full and bright
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

Oh, what a sight
Look at the light
All for tonight
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

Clouds arranged so they're just so
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

Gonna make some awesome snow
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

The chill wind blows
Making a show
Snowflakes aglow
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

A day that's filled with songs to sing
Ding-dong, ding-dong-ding
Cakes and pastries we shall bring
Ding-dong, ding-dong-ding
We're so busy making merry
Windigos should all be wary
As our mighty voices carry
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

Decorations we shall make
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

Perfection you just cannot fake
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

Not one mistake
Don't let that break
Oh, goodness' sake!
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once a—

Happy, happy Hearth's Warming Eve
Happy, happy Hearth's Warming Eve
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again!

"SAY GOODBYE TO THE HOLIDAY"

Happy Hearth's Warming
They say in the street
Happy Hearth's Warming
They think they're so sweet

Words said so often that they
Lack any meaning
Why should I join in when I
Could be intervening?

Everypony loves this
Cursed holiday
But would they be better off
With it out of the way?
Well, okay


Say goodbye to the holiday
With my magic, I'll erase it
The greatest gift that I give today
And everypony will have to face it
No more little games for you to play
After you say goodbye to the holiday

Goodbye, Hearth's Warming
You had a good run
Goodbye, Hearth's Warming
It's over, you're done

Finally set free from your
Forced celebrations
No need to reply to your
Trite invitations
Calendar shorter by a single day
Is my magic up to the test?
Time to see, I can't delay



"THE SEEDS OF THE PAST (PARTS 1 & 2)"

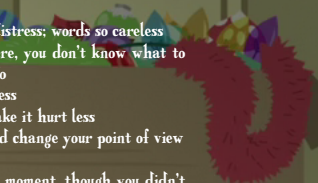


Say goodbye to the holiday
Prepare the spell, no hesitation
All memory shall fade away
See Equestria's new transformation
No more shall anypony say
Happy Hearth's Warming
After today
After today

As a young thing, life sure is somethin'
You go makin' choices large and small
Always growin' like a seedlin'
And playin' is like dreamin'
And before you know it, big and tall


And every little bitty choice you make
Sends you down a path to who you are
today
So let's take a little trip down memory
lane
And see just what the past has to say

The seeds of the past
They grow pretty fast
Just look at who you were back then
The seeds, as they grow
Look what they can show
Reveal the truth time and again



Then some distress; words so careless
Standin' there, you don't know what to
do
Feelin' helpless
You can't make it hurt less
So you go and change your point of view

And in that moment, though you didn't
know it
Your defenses set up walls you built to
last
Leading to the pony you've become
today
And the spell you're about to cast
It all comes from your past



The seeds of the past
We grow up so fast
Some hurts never go away
The seeds, as they grow
This we can't let go
All tied to this one holiday

“PIKIE’S PRESENT”

Take a look at everything around you
All the smells that surely will astound
you
Open up your heart, it will surround you
In the magic of Hearth’s Warming Eve

The little things that make it better
Little ponies spreading cheer
Give a toy, a hug, a sweater
Memories that last all year

The present’s always filled with
presents
Large, medium, and small
Sometimes the most important things
Aren’t very big at all

What a party, there’s so much to see
here
Can’t believe you didn’t want to be here
You’d have had a blast, I guarantee
here
This is the spirit of Hearth’s Warming
Eve

Cider’s flowing, this is living
Come on and feel the heat
Life is better when you’re giving
Each time you do it feels so sweet

The present’s always filled with
presents
So come on, open your eyes
Spend time with ponies just like you
And watch your spirits rise

“LUNA’S FUTURE”

I see a cold wind blowing through
I see days neither fun nor free
I see a future caused by you
I see a path not meant to be

The future should be filled with magic
Dreams and wishes brought to life
But the days ahead are dark and tragic
No time for hope when all is strife

Whatever might have been
All the dreams that ponies share
Because of you, Snowfall Frost
Now the future is a cold nightmare



"HEARTH'S WARMING EVE IS HERE ONCE AGAIN (REPRISE)"

Hearth's Warming Eve is filled with
presents

Some take you by surprise
A story shared by your good friends
That makes your spirits rise

Sometimes you just let go of the past
Enjoy the present while it lasts
And really it's not that much to ask
With good friends by your side

Now it's time to celebrate
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again
All together, feeling great
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again

Can hardly wait
We'll party 'til late
Our favorite date
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once a—

Happy, happy Hearth's Warming Eve
Happy, happy Hearth's Warming Eve
Hearth's Warming Eve is here once
again!



THE SADDLE ROW REVIEW

We head back to Manehattan for the opening of Rarity's new boutique... in double flashback form!

This episode was quite different structurally from others in the show, and featured numerous scenes of the Mane 6 (and others) talking directly to the camera. As is usual for dialogue-heavy episodes, the score took a back seat for parts of the episode. Even with that, there are still 14 tracks from "The Saddle Row Review." Many of these tracks are short themes for some of the new characters, such as the Plaids and Buried Lede.

Of note, this episode approaches Manehattan slightly differently; more as a place we already know like Ponyville. There's no grand introduction or large cityscapes as we've had with most of the past episodes in the city. Thusly, the normal motifs for it that usually appear in its episodes are absent from the score. There are 3 tracks of electronic music from your friendly neighborhood DJ Pon-3 to take in: a slightly different musical palate than normal.

Score

Unsurprisingly, we're greeted with much harpsichord at the episode's start, and as it continues. This is par-for-the-course for Rarity episodes, as it is her main instrumentation. Our first of a few themes for the new characters introduced in this episode comes in "The Inside Scoop." Here, the reporter character, Buried Lede, receives a cool jazz noir track with plenty of sax and bass. The second new character theme of the episode comes for Mr. Stripes in his title track. To match his Russian-esc accent, a slavic-inspired score is presented. It's quite a different style of score for the series. The final new character theme is for Mr. Stripes' daughter, Plaid Stripes.

A stylized illustration of Pinkie Pie from My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic. She is depicted from the chest up, wearing a DJ hat with a pink band and a purple visor. She has a confident smile and is looking slightly to the right. Her mane is a mix of pink, purple, and blue. The background is a vibrant purple and blue gradient. In the foreground, there are two turntables with vinyl records, a DJ mixer with various knobs and sliders, and several small, colorful party hats (pink, blue, and purple) scattered around. The overall aesthetic is that of a retro, neon-lit nightclub.

This very short track is very Pinkie-esc score-wise, to match Plaid's over-the-top and hyperactive nature.

"Club Pony Party Palace" is one of three electronic tracks played by DJ Pon-3 in the episode. What's great is that while William Anderson and team could have saved time and simply used the same cue for each of these scenes, they actually constructed a different track for each one. While we've had electronic music in the main series before (such as previous fashion show scenes, and the fantastic Vinyl/Octavia duel in episode 100), this is probably the most we've had in a single episode. "Club Pony Party Palace" has a much more mechanical sound, and is much more "electronic" than the other two.

"Sweep Sweep Sweep Sweep" brings a little cute meme to this episode's soundtrack.

"The Sickest of Beats" is the second of the electronic tunes from the episode; this one from Pinkie's scene in the club. This is probably the most complete/substantial track of the three, and sounds more of the house music sub-genre. The track ends with Pinkie sabotaging the club with some elevator music.

The third and final electronic track from the episode, "Rarity For You" is much more in-line with previous fashion show score from the series. The instrumentation and overall feel is much more subdued than the other two tracks, with the main instrument having an airy sound.

APPLEJACK'S "DAY" OFF



A rather simple slice-of-life episode compared to the past few, "Applejack's 'Day' Off" has the feel of a classic season 1 or 2 episode of the show. It's a more uneventful (overall) character study episode, which helps to highlight how some of the characters have grown over the show's run, and where they still falter.

The episode's score is also in tune with this, including a wonderful guitar-filled montage number which definitely has that nostalgic-MLP feel. The "Magic of Friendship" motif also makes a more prominent comeback in this episode.

Score

The episode begins in "Quality Spa Time" with a reappearance of the new soothing spa music from earlier in the season in "No Second Prances." In "Pies & Problems," we hear the classic Apple Family motif "A Minutes Rest," which has been used in the series for the Apples since Season 3's "Apple Family Reunion." This cue is heard a few times throughout the episode: it appears again in "Feedin' the Pigs," along with the first of a few "Magic of Friendship" motif drops throughout the episode. As Twilight falls, and is stopped by the rope just before hitting the ground in "Piglet: Impossible," we hear a parody of the "Mission: Impossible" theme.

This episode's wonderful montage music is featured in "Fixin' the Steam Problem" and "Fixin' the Farm." This catchy tune is driven heavily by guitars, with the main being slide guitar; maybe a little banjo in there, too. However, it has a slightly synthesized backing to it, which you can hear prominently at times at the end of some of the verses and near the song's end.

All of this combined leads this song to really have a nostalgic MLP season 1 or 2 vibe to it. The main melody is incredibly catchy, and the multi-guitar backing leads a a nice, full feeling.

FLUTTER BRUTTER

Fluttershy finally receives an episode this season, in which we are introduced to not only her brother, but also parents. Her freeloading sibling is once again taking advantage of Mr. and Mrs. Shy, and it's up to Fluttershy to try and help him overcome his fear of failure, and accomplish his dreams on his own.

The score for "Flutter Brutter" is filled with both numerous classic Fluttershy woodwind themes, and some "hip" jazz-poetry score for her brother, Zephyr Breeze. Expect plenty of bass and bongos, especially in his title track. To top it all off, we have a surprise song to cap off the episode's story—the third episode with one this season.

Score

The episode begins in "Lunch With the Shys" and one of Fluttershy's classic motifs. By the end of the scene, her brother, Zephyr Breeze enters, and brings with him our first taste of his hip, jazzy score. We'll hear this cue for him multiple times throughout the episode, included an extended version in the next track which bears his name. You've gotta love the bongos and prominent upright bass.

The episode's more emotional conclusion begins in "Fear of Failure," which ends with a lovely little emotional woodwind and string cue. In the episode's title track, the alternate melody version of the "Magic of Friendship" motif makes an appearance, followed by Zephyr and Fluttershy's motifs, which have been featured throughout.

Can I Do It On My Own

This is a classic-sounding My Little Pony and Fluttershy song. Its instrumentation is filled with acoustic guitar, mandolin, and woodwinds, and builds nicely to its conclusion. Its instrumentation is similar to "Make This Castle a Home" as well, but with a less-grandiose buildup. "Can I Do It On My Own" is a montage song, meaning that its purpose is to allow us to see Zephyr gaining his self confidence, and practicing (over time) to style manes, in an entertaining and quick way.

We also have something that's rather uncommon for My Little Pony: male lead vocals. Its great that Zephyr received some singing lines in the song, not only due to the male lead vocals, but also because it was important to the episode's story, due to it being about him having to come to terms with failure, and moving past his fear of it.

It was also fantastic having another song with a Fluttershy & Rainbow Dash duet. They deliver some wonderful duet vocals together, something which has been apparent ever since their "May the Best Pet Win" song back in season 2. Listening to the instrumental, one of the best parts is certainly the percussion. From little things such as well-placed glockenspiel and wind chimes, to the drum fills throughout, especially the one after the bridge to the final lines, it's very enjoyable. The ending also brings in some brass at just the right time to emphasize the triumphant nature of what Zephyr is doing for himself.

"CAN I DO IT ON MY OWN"

Everypony has times in their lives
When their hearts are filled with
doubt

Frustration builds up inside
And it makes you want to shout

But if you just take that first step
The next one will appear
And you find you can walk, then run
Then fly
Into the stratosphere

You've got to give it your best
So you can pass the test
Give it everything that you've got
And we know you can win
You just have to begin
Have to give it your very best shot

There are times when you want to give
up

When you think that you can't go on
But if you fight through with all of
your might

You will find that you can't go wrong
That you could do it all along

Everypony has times in their lives
When their hearts are filled with
doubt

But if you just give it your all
You'll start to work it out

And I know I can't give up too soon
Get myself in the zone
And I find I can walk, then run
Then fly
I can do it on my own

You can do it on your own
I can do it on my own
I can do it on my own



SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

The Cutie Map is back! After a noticeable absence since the Season 5 finale, one that is nicely even pointed out by the Mane 6, Twilight and Starlight are able to use a spell to re-activate the map. And after a little rebooting, it quickly calls Pinkie Pie and Rarity to Canterlot to solve an issue.

While in Canterlot, we're treated to reprises of the Cutie Map motifs from Season 5, plenty of Indian-style score (with ample sitar), and another new song. Both the score and song tread new ground music-wise for the series; it's always fantastic to see MLP continue to branch out into different genres. Plus, this episode has something that the show hasn't had since Season 1's "Winter Wrap Up": an instrumental reprise.

Score

"Spice Up Your Life" begins with a quick drop of Twilight Sparkle's theme as she is discussing the Cutie Map with the rest of Mane 6 and Starlight. Twilight shifts the discussion over to Starlight assisting her with resurrecting the map, during which we hear a motif which first appeared in Season 3's "Magic Duel" in the tracks "A Real Magical Amulet" and "A Second Duel!" This theme was then utilized again, at a slower tempo, in Season 5's "What About Discord?" in the track "The Science of Friendship." This newer, slower version appears here.

They cast their spell with a piece of score which starts out sounding loosely like the Cutie Map call music used at the beginning of most Cutie Map episodes in Season 5. As Pinkie Pie and Rarity's cutie marks approach them, the buildup in the score utilizes the same key as the previous mentioned theme as well.

In "Canterlot Friendship Ambassadors," as Rarity and Pinkie Pie travel to the capitol city, we're greeted with a short drop of the traveling motif we heard in Season 5's Cutie Map

episodes, starting with that season's premiere. "Fancy Cuisine" is comprised of some fancy string quartet score.

Pinkie Pie finds a restaurant, one with no stars at all, "The Tasty Treat." Here, we are introduced to our first Indian score of the episode, complete with plenty of sitar. Just like this episode's song, it's great to hear some new and different styles of music in this episode's score. This sitar-driven score is continued for Coriander Cumin's introductory track. We are introduced to the pale, colorless, monotone food critic Zesty Gourmand in her title track. This short cue comprises of her uptight piano and string motif. This score is expanded upon in the following track "'That's Art'."

"Full of Flavor" begins with an end-lesson motif which was last heard at the end of "No Second Prances" this season in the track "A Second Chance." Here, it has some added sitar to help it match with the episode's musical stylings. The sitar theme from earlier picks up again as patrons enter the restaurant. Zesty Gourmand notices the commotion, and scolds everyone, accompanied by her motif from earlier in the episode.

The episode ends with "Friendship in Canterlot," which brings with it another Cutie Map motif. As Rarity and Pinkie Pie's cutie marks glow, signifying that their mission is complete, the xylophone cue which has appeared in the previous Season 5 Cutie Map episodes returns. This is then followed by one more reprise of the sitar-driven score to take us to the episode's end.



It's Gonna Work

In "It's Gonna Work," Daniel Ingram & team once again dive into a new music genre for the series, and nail it. A Bollywood musical number, this one has plenty of woodwinds, strings, sitar, and percussion, backed with a heavy bass line.

In addition, this also marks Rarity's first duet song, and the first between her and Pinkie Pie. Both of them receive their own solos during the song as they explain their methods, leading to the nice duets during the chorus, with Rarity taking the lower harmonies.

"It's Gonna Work" is certainly one of the series' more unique songs, and expands on the already large number of genres the series has covered.

In addition, this episode has something we haven't heard since Season 1's "Winter Wrap Up"—an instrumental reprise of a song. Just like the previous one, here the song's instrumental is used over a short montage of Rarity and Pinkie Pie helping to fix the restaurant up the way Saffron and Coriander want it, instead of Zesty Gourmand.



"IT'S GONNA WORK"

Here's what I know
If you want to succeed
You must follow the trends: That's the
key

If you want to show
That you've got what it takes
You must be what they want you to be

Here's what I know
Your food is so good
The flavor's so fancy and free
You just need to show
That unique sense of taste
Go on, be yourself, let them see

It's gonna work
I know it's gonna work
It's gonna work out just fine, trust me
It's gonna work
I swear it's gonna work
It's gonna work out just fine, you'll see

You need to change
If you want to compete
But fear not, for I know what to do
I know it feels strange
But trust me, when we're done
We'll make sure that you're a hit, too

Don't ever change
Being different is good
Don't let what others do be your cue
Never rearrange
'Cause somepony said you should
Just trust your heart, it will know what
to do

It's gonna work
I know it's gonna work
It's gonna work out just fine, trust me
It's gonna work
I swear it's gonna work
It's gonna work out just fine, you'll see

Be unique
Just be the same
Trust your heart
You'll make your name

We'll help you every step of the way
Because we know what you need to do
And you should know it too

It's gonna work
I know it's gonna work
It's gonna work out just fine, trust me
It's gonna work
I swear it's gonna work
It's gonna work out just fine, you'll see



STRANGER THAN FAN-FICTION

Season 6 continues with a parody of fandoms, and lessons which all can take to heart about disagreements within. Rainbow Dash heads to a Daring Do convention, where she meets Quibble Pants (voiced by Patton Oswalt), another fan who has some... disagreements with her regarding the book series.

Our third Daring Do-centered episode of course brings back all of the classic score for her adventures from the previous two, as well as a few new pieces for her adventures here. Expect plenty of Indiana Jones-inspired tracks, with grand, orchestral pieces throughout.

Score

The episode begins right away with some Daring Do, with just the orchestration you'd expect. As things begin to look tough, we have the Daring Do action motif which has been used in her previous appearances, before Twilight suddenly stops reading. We enter the opening with our first taste of Daring Do's main motif. In "Daring Con," Rainbow Dash explores the floor of the Daring Do Convention. The scene begins with a more upbeat version of the daring mare's motif played on xylophone and piano. This picks up tempo and adds some choir as Quibble Pants begins to gush over Daring Do.

"Convention Escapades" is the score for the convention exploration montage scene, and features fun and bouncy orchestral score; it's one of many montage tracks from this season. In "An Emergency," Rainbow Dash attempts to find Daring Do to inform her of her non-fan fan. However, she quickly finds out that she is on another secret mission, and up against Dr. Caballeron once again. The scene begins with some mysterious music as Dash and Daring Do discuss the issues at hand. This part is full of piano and harp, with a little oboe backing, giving it a tense feeling.

Dr. Caballeron enters the convention in "Dr. Caballeron at the Con" to search for Daring Do, and is greeted by his devious middle eastern-inspired motif, which has proceeded him in his previous appearances. We hear this cue for him multiple times throughout the episode. Quibble Pants also receives his own motif in his self-named track.

The action begins to become all-too-real for Rainbow Dash and Quibble Pants in "The Precarious Rope Bridge." As Quibble falls, the Daring Do fighting motif makes its first appearance of the episode.

In "This is Real!," Quibble Pants finally realizes that the situation they are in is not fiction, and the two attempt to escape from the temple. Daring Do comes in to save the pair, along with her heroic motif. The Chicomoztoc motif which made its first appearance in "The Precarious Rope Bridge" makes a short return as they enter the room with 7 doors.

The final track "A Couple of Yearlights" starts off with one more brief reprise of Daring Do's heroic motif, which then shifts back to a slower version the piano & xylophone version from earlier in the episode.

As Quibble Pants explains his realization to Dash, one of the newer lesson motifs is utilized. This one last (and first) appeared during the flashback in season 5's "Made in Manehattan" in the track "Midsummer Theatre Revival," and again at the end of that episode in "Friendship in Manehattan."

THE CART BEFORE THE PONIES

The Cutie Mark Crusaders are set up to compete in the Applewood Derby; but when they ask their sisters for assistance, they receive more help than they bargained for.

This episode had a few unexpected things throughout. It seemed like we were receiving some more William Anderson montage score during the carts' construction, but as the scene progressed, it began to sound like the beginning of a song, but then turned out to not be. However, later during the race, the episode did surprise with a song, and it was revealed that the music during the previous montage was actually its instrumental. To top it all off, we did have a short race montage score to conclude the episode with.

"The Cart Before the Ponies" features some of the best blending of score and song in the series, outside of the musical episodes. There are a few times where it is hard to figure out if pieces of score were parts of the song's instrumental or not, as Anderson did a superb job of playing upon the song's style, especially in the final race montage.

The song itself again has that season 1 & 2 feel to it, with heavy acoustic guitar and mandolin, as well as a fun, extremely catchy melody. This is only the third episode of the show which features an instrumental of the song featured in the episode (the other two being "Winter Wrap Up" and this season's "Spice Up Your Life"). However, this is the first episode in which said instrumental appears before the song itself.

Score

"The Cart Before the Ponies" begins with a lovely little track for the school house. This new score begins some upbeat pizzicato strings and airy woodwinds. A clarinet then continues us to the next string and woodwind segments. The track ends with a grand orchestral hit as Cheerilee announces the Applewood Derby. This continues into "The Catch."

In "Trying Something Different," the CMC leave the schoolhouse to discuss their Derby carts, and we start with some classy woodwind and harpsichord score. This transitions to a beautiful piece of woodwind and piano score to lead us into the track's triumphant conclusion. "Speed Rainbow" brings a little "Speed Racer" homage to the series, with its prominent trumpets and backing brass.

William Anderson's score takes a pretty neat, and catchy turn in "Rebuilding the Carts" and "The Applewood Derby," with the latter being the full version of the cue. It first appeared at the start of the song, "Derby Racers," which it led directly into.

There's quite a few points to make about this final track. First off, it's a nice, simple, guitar and piano-driven piece -- something that is right at home with the CMC. As it reaches the second verse, Anderson adds in the piano and glockenspiel, two key instruments for the Crusaders. The entire track has such a classic feel for the show, harkening back to the CMC's earlier episodes in its first seasons.

Secondly, one must appreciate how this track (thematically and in instrumentation) blends with Daniel Ingram's song for the episode. All the proof you need of that is how the song began with this score, and it really still sounded like one, single concise piece musically. William Anderson did a great job blending the two together, and this is probably some of the best song and score melding I've seen in the series, obviously outside the musical episodes.

Derby Racers

For only the third episode of the series, and surprisingly the second one of this season, this episode contains an instrumental version of the song for one of the montage scenes. However, in a first for the series, this instrumental appears before the actual song does, acting as a prelude which is reprised later.

As for the song itself, "Derby Racers" is fun, simple, and really carries that Season 1 or 2 style. It has the strong acoustic guitar and mandolin presence, and an extremely catchy melody.

The song actually begins with a bit of the final racing montage's score by William Anderson. This score then seamlessly blends in with the actual start of Daniel Ingram's song. From there, we have a short chant leading us into the first verse.

Applejack, Rarity, and Rainbow Dash each receive solo parts in the verses, with the CMC joining in with some fantastic harmonies between the three. The chorus has a fun feeling with all of the spectators joining in with a sing-chant.

The beat might be the song's most catchy part, both in the lyrics and percussion. The vocal buildup in the bridge to the final chorus is also very enjoyable.

"DERBY RACERS"

Go, go, go

Check me out, racin' the Derby
Check out my old-fashioned cart
Check me out, racing the Derby
In my original work of art

Check me out, faster than ever
There's nopony can catch me now
Let me out, I'd do it over
If I only knew how

Giddyup, derby racers
Giddyup, derby racers
Giddyup, derby racers
Go, go, go

My cart's the most original
Designed with imagination
My cart's the most traditional
Just plain, no complications

Look at me, I am the ace
Might as well give up the chase
Wish we could stop this race
Start again and do it our way

Giddyup, derby racers
Giddyup, derby racers
Giddyup, derby racers
Go, go, go!

Gotta get some attention
If I want that ribbon
Gotta push the limit further
Blow away the competition

Gotta coast on through
Just relax, we're gonna cruise it
Guess I don't really care
Since we're clearly gonna lose it

See, everypony's watching
Presentation is a glory
Just passed you, even faster
Speed is king, end of story

Bigger, bolder down the track
Love the view from the back of the
pack

Won't stop, we're on the attack
Too late to take it all back

Giddyup, derby racers
Giddyup, derby racers
Giddyup, derby racers
Go, go



28 PRANKS LATER

When Rainbow Dash's pranks become out-of-hand, Pinkie Pie and the rest of Ponyville find a way to get her back, and teach her a lesson.

"28 Pranks Later" delivered quite a bit of score, in many various styles. The episode begins with some horror score, before drifting into some more normal fair driven by the musical stylings of the Mane 6 currently featured on screen. The score then delivers us a fantastic polka pranking montage track, then multiple super-spooky and tense horror score, and even another featured piece over the credits.

Score

"28 Pranks Later" is filled with plenty of horror-style score, including cues which have appeared before. One of these is heard right at the episode's start in "Unwelcoming Woods." The score switches gears for "Prank Cake," which features some lovely harpsichord-driven tango as Rarity inspects the prank.

"Prank Polka" brings something we haven't heard in a bit — polka! This particular polka theme last appeared in Season 5's "The One Where Pinkie Pie Knows" in the track "Avoiding Ponies Polka." The version here is slightly extended and modified versus last season's. This melody is based off the "Clarinet Polka," which you should be familiar with if you've ever watched "Charlie the Unicorn." Another montage score appears in "Selling Some Sweets."

"Cookie Coma" begins our classic horror score homage, which features some intense strings and blaring horns. This style of score persists to the episode's resolution, and even is brought back over the credits.

THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGELING

The Changelings are back! Or, well... at least one of them. Spike befriends a Changeling, and struggles to gain his friends' acceptance of this.

"The Times They Are A Changeling" features some fantastic score, and Spike's first solo song of the series. He did have a solo song on the Christmas album, and sang the Cloudsdale anthem previously, but this is his first true solo song in the series itself.

The episode's score was fantastic, pulling on some key themes from "A Canterlot Wedding" and "The Crystal Empire," among many others, while blending in some excellent new compositions as well. This included a nice, short montage tune, as well as some emotional and action-packed tracks throughout.

Score

The episode begins with Twilight, Starlight, and Spike on a train to the Crystal Empire to visit her brother and his family. This is accompanied by the traveling motif which was first introduced in the season 5 premiere, "The Cutie Map," and has been utilized numerous times since for whenever we are traveling by train somewhere, usually in the map episodes. From there, as Starlight talks to Twilight, her motif makes an appearance as well. This score also was first used, in a slightly different arrangement, in the season 5 premiere. This changed, or "reformed" arrangement made its first appearance in season 6's opener, "The Crystallizing."

In "Identification," Cadence and Twilight do their "Ladybugs Awake" dance to prove that Twilight is not a Changeling. The score for this moment is the same which was used during season 2's "A Canterlot Wedding" during the flashback where they perform the same dance. It's nice to hear its return here four seasons later. In addition to that, as Cadance begins to speak about the Changelings, some of Chrysalis's score from that episode is also utilized.

In "Changeling!," Spike meets a lone Changeling who recounts his story after the events of Cadance's wedding. After some lovely start to the score, the Changeling tells his story and we flashback to Season 2's finale "A Canterlot Wedding" and the changeling battle scene. The score backing this scene is one of my favorite cues from the Season 3 premiere "The Crystal Empire." This theme appeared in that episode in the track "A Plan Is Forged." As the Changeling continues, the score becomes more emotional. After his short hunger-driven outburst, a small piano melody is featured.

Spike's suave jazz score returns in "Friends? With a Changeling?!" This cue was previously used in season 5's "Princess Spike" in the track "By Order of the Princess," albeit slightly different.

"Fitting In" features this episode's fantastic montage music, backing the disguised Thorax attempting to fit in in the Crystal Empire. The hard piano, soft organ, and string ensemble instrumentation, as well as the percussion, deliver a great sound for this score.

Spike searches for and confronts Thorax in "A Changed Changeling." When he finally confronts him, an angry Thorax is backed by the Changeling / Chrysalis motif from the season 2 finale, "A Canterlot Wedding." This score also previously appeared in the season 5 finale "The Cutie Re-Mark" during the Changelings' reappearance there as well. As Twilight and Cadance discuss the situation, William Anderson uses a quicker tempo version of a part of the score from the season 3 episode "The Crystal Empire" in the track "Previously in the Crystal Empire..."

As Twilight speaks in the episode's final track, score from the season 4 finale track "Friendship is the Key" is used. Given its initial use in that episode of Twilight extending friendship to Discord, its reuse here is quite fitting.

The episode ends with a theme that's been used for Spike's lessons a few times. It first appeared in season 4's "Testing... Testing... 1, 2, 3" in the track "Learning Differently." After that, it was utilized twice for Spike's lessons in "Equestria Games" and "Princess Spike," before being used again this season at the end of "On Your Marks."

A Changeling Can Change

Spike's first true solo song in the series is a beautiful, slow, and emotional piano ballad. It begins mostly with piano and vocals, adding in a few subtle string and flute parts. As we reach the first chorus, a harp flourish signals the backing to become more prominent, giving the song some additional energy and emotion.

The song's build up continues from there into bridge, where the string ensemble comes to the forefront, and horns join the symphony. The counter melodies in the string ensemble and piano backing the bridge really add to its emotional hit. Before we arrive at the final chorus, the instrumentation backs off a bit, leaving the piano in the forefront once again, accentuating the weight of Spike's lyrics.

The next chorus brings back the full orchestra, and an extremely beautiful sound leading to its minor chord ending and next verse. This verse begins simple in the instrumentation, with only the piano and a one-note hold on the strings, before the woodwinds and strings come back in full, adding in some acoustic guitar and percussion as well.

This leads into the final, grand chorus, which brings back the full orchestra, with more prominent horns and percussion for that grandiose-feeling ending.

"A Changeling Can Change" is probably the most beautiful song of the season thus far, and one of the top ones of the series. It backs the emotional plea from Spike that the scene is representing, and progresses its part of the story well.

"A CHANGELING CAN CHANGE"

Would you say I'm a hero
Glorious and brave
If I told you something you wouldn't
believe?
That sometimes I'm scared
And I can make mistakes
And I'm not so heroic, it seems

But if day can turn to night
And the darkness turn to light
Then why can't we imagine
A changeling can change?

No two ponies are exactly the same
No two snowflakes ever match their
design
And I thought I was strong
But I was nothing but wrong
When I forgot to be friendly and kind

But if day can turn to night
And the darkness turn to light
Then why can't we imagine
A changeling can change?

Would you say I'm a hero
Glorious and brave
If I told you something you wouldn't
believe?
This changeling, it seems
Knows the real me
And would stay by my side 'til the end

So if day can turn to night
And the darkness turn to light
Then why can't we imagine
Just why can't we imagine
Then why can't we imagine
A changeling can change?



DUNGEONS & DISCORDS



Discord joins Big Mac and Spike for a guys' night, where he is roped into playing Dungeons & Dragons... err Ogres & Oubliettes!

This episode's score is quite enjoyable to listen to, and offers a few different tastes. As we enter the game world of O&O, expect plenty of medieval and epic tracks, much like we heard previously this season in Gauntlet of Fire. In addition to all the action, there's also a fantastic track of bebop jazz for Discord's 1940s club scene.

Score

The episode begins with some Fluttershy tunes, and foreshadowing to some of its later cues. A little later in "Ya'll Ready for Chaos?," as Discord enters Twilight's castle to meet Spike and Big Mac, he does so in the most ridiculous way possible: a 90s basketball-style entrance. This is complete with jumping through a held paper wall, and this electronic score very reminiscent of 2 Unlimited's "Get Ready For This."

The introductory track, "Ogres & Oubliettes," is our first taste into the game's and episode's main score. There's a few motifs scattered throughout here which will be reused throughout the episode. The track begins with the grand score for the game itself, before drifting into a more medieval-inspired piece for the characters. We drift between these two themes to the track's end, which features another, more mysterious score.

Finding the O&O game unappealing, Discord transports Spike and Big Mac to a 1940s-inspired dance club in "A Real Guys' Night." The scene is complete with this fantastic bebop jazz score. You can always count on William Anderson and MLP to try out different styles of music, and this is no exception. Jazz has definitely had a more pronounced presence in the series the past few seasons (see: "Pinkie's Present," "Rarity Investigates").

BUCKBALL SEASON

It's Andrea vs Ashleigh in this week's Friendship is Magic episode! A Buckball game between Ponyville and Appleloosa is on, and Applejack and Rainbow Dash are out to find a third pony for their team. They wind up finding a few in the most unlikely of places.

"Buckball Season" is a little lighter in the BGM, at least compared to the previous few episodes. It does carry a bit score from many previous sports-related FiM romps, including that from "Rainbow Falls" and "Equestria Games." However, we can't simply overlook the awesome guitar-driven training montage track, a definite welcome to any episode!

Score

"Buckball Season" begins with some of the series' fast-paced action score from episodes such as "Equestria Games."

"Serious Practice" brings us the episode's awesome training montage music. This score is led by electric guitar and rockin' drums. We haven't heard this kind of montage score since season 4's "Rainbow Falls." It's also reminiscent of the montage score from season 2's "Hurricane Fluttershy." During the second part of the montage, the guitar is more subdued, which allows for some synthesizers to shine through the score (another staple of classic training montage music).

Throughout the rest of the episode, we'll hear cues which have been used previously in the series in episodes such as "Maud Pie," "Applejack's 'Day' Off," and "It Ain't Easy Being Breezies."

THE FAULT IN OUR CUTIE MARKS

The Cutie Marks Crusaders are doing well with their new purpose and calling: helping others with their cutie marks! That is, until a Griffon, Gabby, shows up looking for assistance in finding hers. The CMC must surmount this seemingly impossible challenge.

"The Fault in Our Cutie Marks" brings the 12th, and surprisingly, final song of the season, "Find the Purpose in Your Life." This also puts Ed Valentine's episodes up to 4 for 4 in terms of including songs; including his previous episode this season, "The Cart Before the Ponies," another one which was CMC-focused. This catchy number brings with it that classic style of CMC and Pony songs and instrumentation, so expect plenty of acoustic guitars and mandolin.

William Anderson's score doesn't disappoint, and even with the song is more plentiful than the previous episode. Gabby brings with her one of Griffonstone's motifs from last season's "The Lost Treasure of Griffonstone." The score becomes more emotional as the episode continues, and we hear a few reprised pieces of score near its end.



Score

The episode's score begins with the Cutie Mark Crusader fanfare, which made its first appearance back in season 3's "One Bad Apple." This continues with another older CMC guitar motif. This one was first heard back in, hilariously enough, season 4's "Flight to the Finish" (a previous Ed Valentine episode) in the track "Are You In?".

As we see our first shot of Gabby the Griffon in her title track, a short pan flute cue plays, which is very much in the style of the score from Season 5's "The Lost Treasure of Griffonstone." The musical parallels continue throughout this track, and into the next one. Gabby introduces herself, backed by her own flute motif, before she starts fan-girling again.

Gabby gives the CMC, and us, a little of her history, and why she is here seeking the CMC's help. It seems that she was always more friendly and helpful than the rest of the Griffons, and when Rainbow Dash and Pinkie Pie visited her town after the map called them last season, she knew that following them to their home would help her find her purpose. This is a nice tie-in to last season's "The Lost Treasure of Griffonstone," and the score for Gabby's story follows suit. William Anderson utilizes the Griffonstone motif which was used in that previous episode. As Gabby begins talking about Pinkie and Rainbow, the score shifts to a new, more positive cue. She begins to finish her story, we hear a reprise of her woodwind and string motif from the previous track "Gabby the Griffon." As Pinkie and Rainbow leave the Griffon Kingdom in Gabby's flashback, with their cutie marks pulsating signifying that their work there is done, the "mission complete" map motif from last season's map episodes makes a brief reappearance — a nice, small touch.

In "A Fake Mark," Gabby's ruse is discovered. As she explains to the CMC why she did what she did, the score uses a piano and guitar cue. We heard this previously in this season's "Stranger Than Fan Fiction" in "A Couple of Yearlights," and first in season 5's "Made in Manehattan." The episode concludes with a piece of score that screams CMC, with its guitar and synth bells. It sounds like a modified version of the ending score to "The Cart Before the Ponies" from the track "The Applewood Derby." It uses the same guitar cue, albeit with a different synth melody.

Find the Purpose in Your Life

The overall sound of "Find the Purpose in Your Life" is most certainly a Cutie Mark Crusader song, relying on guitar and mandolin to really drive its theme. It begins with a march in the percussion, bringing flashbacks to a previous CMC (and Ed Valentine) song, "Hearts Strong as Horses" from Season 4. The mandolin and some glockenspiel enter as we start the first chorus, followed quickly by the guitar backing for Gabby's verse.

The march style continues as the first chorus is reached, and Gabby goes through helping different ponies. There seems to be a few whip cracks in the back here in there, again paralleling similarities to "Hearts Strong as Horses."

Next is the song's first bridge, which brings in more orchestra in the backing, while the drums back off from their march. This quickly builds into the next verse, with more pronounced mandolin, before we go to the final chorus. This returns to the march feel, but with additional string ensemble.

A second, beautiful bridge makes an appearance next. The song's emotional level really reaches its peak here, as the instrumentation brings in more pronounced string counter melodies, and some powerful drum hits in the percussion. Which then leads us to the song's final buildup and end, utilizing the mandolin from the verses.

Another fantastic CMC song from Daniel Ingram, with some great instrumentation by Caleb Chan, especially in the two bridges.

"FIND THE PURPOSE IN YOUR LIFE"

Like a racer at the starting line
You're chomping at the bit
You are here to find your purpose
And a place you really fit
And until you find your place in life
You're never gonna quit
We can help you find the purpose in
your life

A griffon mixes lion's strength
With winged eagle's might
When I finally find my purpose
Then my cutie mark's in sight
Crusaders, I won't let you down
I've just begun to fight
You're gonna help me find the purpose
in my life

Got a job that's just no fun?
Call on me, I'll get it done
Cauldron's stuck and needs a mix?
I'm the one who's got the fix

Help you teach pre-calculus
Scrub the floors, won't make a fuss
Clearing kelp? Just give a yelp
Raring to go, ready to help

That's the spirit
You ought to see what you do best
Try it all, pick your fave
And leave behind the rest

I'll try anything
To get my cutie mark
Keep up with me, Crusaders
We're just getting our start

Rock your little ones to sleep
While hanging up the sheets
I can help you with your heavy load
Walk Granny 'cross the street
I'll run you 'round the bases fast
It's really no big feat
Can we help her find the purpose in
her life?

Cheer you if you're feeling low
Plant your garden, make it grow
Write a piece for your quartet
Filling in on clarinet

Bake that cake as fast as lightning
She's so good at things, it's frightening
Cutie Mark Crusaders,
I think we've got a problem

Build a boat
And sail it out across the sea
Need some help?
You know that you can count on me

CMCs
You're gonna help me find my purpose
The purpose in my life
In my life



VIVA LAS PEGASUS

What happens in Las Pegasus stays in Las Pegasus. Unless the Cutie Map is involved! In the season of "Exploring Equestria," we finally are able to once again see a new location, as well as have our second map episode of season 6. Applejack and Fluttershy are called to Las Pegasus to solve a friendship problem, but they encounter a surprisingly friendly venue, and a few unfriendly acquaintances.

Some great score from William Anderson here, including the return of Flim & Flam's motifs, and some nice, albeit short big band Vegas-style music.

Score

The episode begins, and quickly gets to the point. Applejack and Fluttershy are being called to Las Pegasus by the Cutie Map. This episode starts up fairly quickly, so we don't have the normal map motifs. We don't see the map actually calling the two ponies, and we jump cut to Las Pegasus rather than seeing them travel by train.

We start with one of the main cues from the past few seasons, before transitioning to another as Twilight begins to talk. This theme is an alternate opening to the series' "Magic of Friendship" motif, which was first heard in the season 4 episode "Maud Pie" in the track "Everypony Loves Pinkie."

The cold open concludes with Fluttershy and Applejack suddenly in Las Pegasus, accompanied by some fantastic Las Vegas-sounding Big Band music. It's great to continue to hear new musical stylings in the series' score. This cue makes another appearance, with a grand finish, later in the episode in the track "High Roller." As Fluttershy and Applejack enter a casino in Las Pegasus, some more Big Band score is heard, with this composition being much slower in tempo than the one in the opener.

Next, the proprietor of the venue, Gladmane, enters the episode with his own track. He receives his own motif for the episode, which is a cue that you will recognize from this season's "The Times They Are a Changeling" in the track "Friends? With a Changeling?" We will hear this motif for Gladmane throughout the episode. Our old friends Flim & Flam return next in their own self-titled track, and bring with them their upbeat ragtime motif. "Flim Flam Brawlers" presents another one of their themes, this one a conniving piano cue.

"Friendship Problems" uses a cue we previously heard in this season's "Applejack's 'Day' Off" in the track "Honestly." This time, this score uses a piano and strings instrumentation vs. straight harpsichord. In "Dinner Discussions," Fluttershy and Applejack sit down for a meal to talk about the situation thus far. They are accompanied by lovely elevator music.

"The Grand Plan" begins with some villainous electric bass score for Gladmane, after which more orchestra is brought in.

As with each map episode, we end with a track containing the "mission complete" map motif, a short glockenspiel-driven cue. The track continues with some more orchestral and guitar score. The episode concludes with more of Flim and Flam's ragtime xylophone score, as they go back to their comen ways.



EVERY LITTLE THING SHE DOES

In fear of failing, Starlight has been putting off more friendship lessons. When Twilight and Spike confront her about it, she tries to tackle all of them with the rest of the Mane 6 at once.

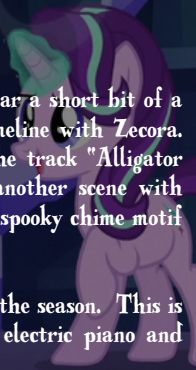
The season of montages and montage music continues with this episode. This is nice, as they give William Anderson a little more freedom to be creative, and offer a more complete track of score. Plus, sound effects and vocal reverb are usually at a minimum since the music takes center-stage.

Besides that, "Every Little Thing She Does" offers plenty of crazy score, some alternate versions of Starlight's themes and the Magic of Friendship motif, as well as some other returning musical stylings from her season 5 premiere.

Score

The episode begins with the "Princess Twilight Sparkle" motif. We also hear a short bit of a cue from the season 5 finale, from when Twilight was in the alternate timeline with Zecora. The cue in the beginning of "Yes, Starlight Glimmer," was first used in the track "Alligator Baker" from the Season 5 episode "The Lost Treasure of Griffonstone," another scene with Pinkie Pie baking. As we transition from character to character, Starlight's spooky chime motif from the Season 5 premiere makes additional appearances.

"Friendship Lessons" presents us with yet another piece of montage score for the season. This is a wonderful lounge-sounding musical composition, with a heavy use of an electric piano and glockenspiel.



P.P.O.V. (PONY POINT OF VIEW)

Rarity, Applejack, and Pinkie Pie return from a boat trip angry with each other, and it's up to Twilight and Spike to figure out what went wrong.

Not as many substantial tracks of score this episode in comparison to the past few, but still a large number of them. We have some nice score for each of the ponies' stories, each ending with some epic-sounding cues as the seas become rough. The episode is capped off by a classic lesson motif, and one of the really catchy tunes which first appeared in season 5's "Amending Fences."

Score

As this episode is told from the points of view of three of the main characters, we hear their standard musical stylings throughout, switching as we switch points of view. We begin with some harpsichord and classy music for Rarity as she tells her story. This mixes in a little pirate-like accordion score as Pirate Jack enters Rarity's flashback. Pinkie's story is backed starting with some bouncy score for the hyperactive pony, followed by more extremely classy score for her version of Rarity. The bouncy style continues in "Party Boat." The harpsichord score continues for Rarity in Applejack's flashback, while the apple-loving pony gets her own seaworthy piccolo part.

As each pony's flashback reaches the ship sinking, the score becomes much more dramatic and cinematic, mixing in a full string section.

The episode concludes in "Friends 'Til the End" with the four ponies having a party on a boat. The lovely piece of score backing this scene was first used in season 5's "Amending Fences" in the track "Blast From the Past." It was used again in "The One Where Pinkie Pie Knows" in the track "You Did It, Pinkie Pie!"

WHERE THE APPLE LIES

After Apple Bloom tells a lie, Granny Smith tells her the story of the time when Applejack told a series of lies which almost destroyed part of the farm's business. "Where the Apple Lies" not only gives us some backstory into AJ's truthful nature, but also some insight into Big Mac's more quiet, listening ways.

As you might expect with an Applejack and Apple Family-centered episode, this episode is filled with the family's motifs, and plenty of banjo. We'll hear a lot of the cues from "Apple Family Reunion," including nice renditions of "A Minute's Rest" and "Apples Departing." Filthy Rich and his fiancé Spoiled Milk also receive their own themes for the episode.

Score

The episode begins with a drop of the "Minutes Rest" motif, and a nice banjo and string waltz for Granny Smith.

Spoiled Rich and his Barnyard Bargains receives their own piano, string, and woodblock-driven motif in their title tracks. We'll hear this cue a couple of times for him throughout the episode. "All the Lies" features on of Applejack's classic banjo themes played in a more orchestral style.

"Telling the Truth" features an emotional cue which, like many of the Apple family's, was first used back in season 3's "Apple Family Reunion" in the track "Ruined. Everything is Ruined." It mixes in a lovely extended version of "A Minutes Rest" at the end.

"Being Honest" features one more piece of classic Apple family score, with this one first being used in Season 3's "Apple Family Reunion" in the track "Apples Departing."

TOP BOLT

In the final map episode of the season, Twilight Sparkle and Rainbow Dash are called to the Wonderbolts Academy to solve a friendship problem.

This episode was filled to the brim with music. As with any Wonderbolts-related episode, it is full of the flyers' heroic fanfares and marches. However, as the episode turns a little more emotional at parts, the score follows suit, leading to some very lovely sounding pieces as well.

In addition to the fanfares and marches, "Top Bolt" also brings us some rockin' electric guitar score near the end for Sky and Vapor's final trials. Extended electric guitar pieces are not something we hear every week in My Little Pony, so it's always awesome when they do come. In addition, this episodes adds more montage score for the season.

Score

After the first two map episodes begin at the Cutie Map, "Top Bolt" leads into this more like map episodes last season, starting on Rainbow Dash at the Wonderbolt's HQ, heading home, and then being called by her mark to the map. The episode begins with the Wonderbolts' March, a motif which had been right at home with the elite fliers' since the first Wonderbolts Academy episode back in season 3.

As Rainbow Dash's cutie mark glows, and flies towards the map, the "Call of the Cutie" motif is utilized. This cue made its appearance with the map back in the season 5 premiere in the track "The Call of the Cutie," and has appeared in most of the map episode which feature an opening which doesn't begin with the characters already at the map.

This episode does not feature a "Summoned to [place]" track, since the short part at the map

didn't feature any substantial score. It also does not feature a "[place] Friendship Ambassadors" track, much like "Viva Las Pegasus," since it does not feature a scene with the duo traveling, and instead transports us directly to the Academy after the opening sequence.

As Twilight and Rainbow fly into the academy in "Return to the Academy," a cue is utilized that we've heard earlier this season in the previous Wonderbolts' episode "Newbie Dash." It was heard at the start of that episode in the track "Full-Fledged Wonderbolt" as she flew through the air in that scene. We'll hear this cue again later in the episode in "Friendship Problem Problems." This is quickly replaced with a deliberate march as Spitfire gives a speech to some new recruits, directly out of season 3's "Wonderbolts Academy." Vapor Trail receives her own subdued and emotional motif in "Confronting Vapor Trail."

"Special Training" is the first montage track for the episode, and features a great mix of orchestra and electric guitars. It also does a fantastic job of syncing itself with the action on screen. The track builds up really nicely as the scene progresses, leading up to its triumphant finish to signify how far Vapor Trail has come in her training.

In "Not a Natural / Too Afraid to Shine," Twilight and Rainbow confront Sky and Vapor, and give them some hard truths. As Twilight talks about her past struggles with friendship, and how even with that she overcame them, "Princess Twilight Sparkle's" motif makes a brief appearance. When Rainbow talks to Vapor, a lovely cue is used which was last (and first) used all the way back in season 3's "Spike at Your Service" in the track "It's Been an Honor Being Your Faithful Assistant."

As if one electric-guitar filled montage wasn't enough, the episode nears its conclusion with more gratuitous electric guitar for the pair's final solo trials. It's great to have another episode with more action scenes in it that are able to be backed with more substantial and energetic score such as this.

As their friendship mission comes to a close, Rainbow Dash and Twilight's cutie marks glow and pulse, signifying their task is complete. This is accompanied by the "map mission complete" motif which has graced the end of every map episode to date during the same scenes in each.

TO WHERE AND BACK AGAIN

Queen Chrysalis and the Changelings are back, and have replaced the Mane 6 and other Equestria leadership. It's up to Starlight Glimmer, and her unlikely set of heroes, to save all of Equestria.

The season ends without a song, leaving its total at 12; quite a bit less than previous ones. However, you have to take into account that since season 4 we've had more or less 2 "musical" episodes each season, a main one, and a secondary one which had just as many tracks. We only had the one this season. Daniel Ingram and co. were more than likely busy working on the movie and Legend of Everfree at the same time.

However, the season more than made up with it in the score department. William Anderson and Kelly Davidson's score totaled to a record 310 tracks, and the finale definitely helped it reach that milestone.

"To Where and Back Again" was filled to the brim with score and returning musical cues. We hear everything from the "Magic of Friendship" motif, to Starlight's, to Trixie's, to Discord's, to the Changelings'... you get the idea. Plus, numerous other themes from the season make their return, leading up to a nice bookend with the final track of the finale being the final track of the premiere. But don't fret: there's plenty of amazing new score in here as well. The entire final 7 minutes of the finale has some of the best score of the series.

Score

We hear a few drops of the "Magic of Friendship" theme throughout the episode; we haven't heard that theme as much as the past two seasons recently. It appears in the opening track, and again in "Moving On?"

In "Back to the Village? / Only a Dream," Starlight returns to her old village—but is it really? Luna reveals it is just a nightmare. As Starlight walks towards the equality village, its motif makes a reappearance for the first time since Season 5's premiere. Technically the village's and Starlight's themes were the same in that episode, but hers had a little more dissonance to it, rather than the much happier sounding score here. This motif was reworked in the Season 6 premiere for Starlight's reformed theme.

The scene and score quickly take a dark turn as Starlight's biggest fears come true. But just when all is lost, the ponies disappear and Princess Luna enters Starlight Glimmer's dream. She brings with her her breathtaking and beautiful motif, which we've heard for most of her appearances since season 3's "Sleepless in Ponyville."

"The Greatest and Most Powerful Friend" begins with Trixie's accordion motif. As they leave for the village, its happy theme is utilized once again, before Trixie's great and powerful promise briefly brings back her tune.

"They're Back!" features an angry Twilight and Mane 6 arriving to confront Starlight, while a spooky and mysterious cue from the season 5 premiere appears in the soundtrack. This made an appearance right before the end of the first part of that two parter, in the track "The Cutie Mark Vault / 'It's A Trap'." Its use here is notable, as Starlight is on the other end of something not seeming right. Luna breaks into her dream with the last of her energy, and the score becomes more orchestral and epic.

The first use of the Changeling transformation cue is heard during "Changeling Meeting," as Queen Chrysalis makes her appearance.

In "Quite the Combination of Secondary Characters," Thorax and Discord appear, and they teleport to where Fluttershy and the Mane 6 are being held captive: the Changeling Kingdom. A short choir score is utilized as Starlight points out Thorax's different-looking wings. Thorax then quotes Princess Twilight, as Twilight herself. Hilariously and fittingly, William Anderson uses the exact same score from the scene Thorax is quoting from "The Times They Are a Changeling." As Starlight accepts this, she interrupts the score which literally slows to a halt.

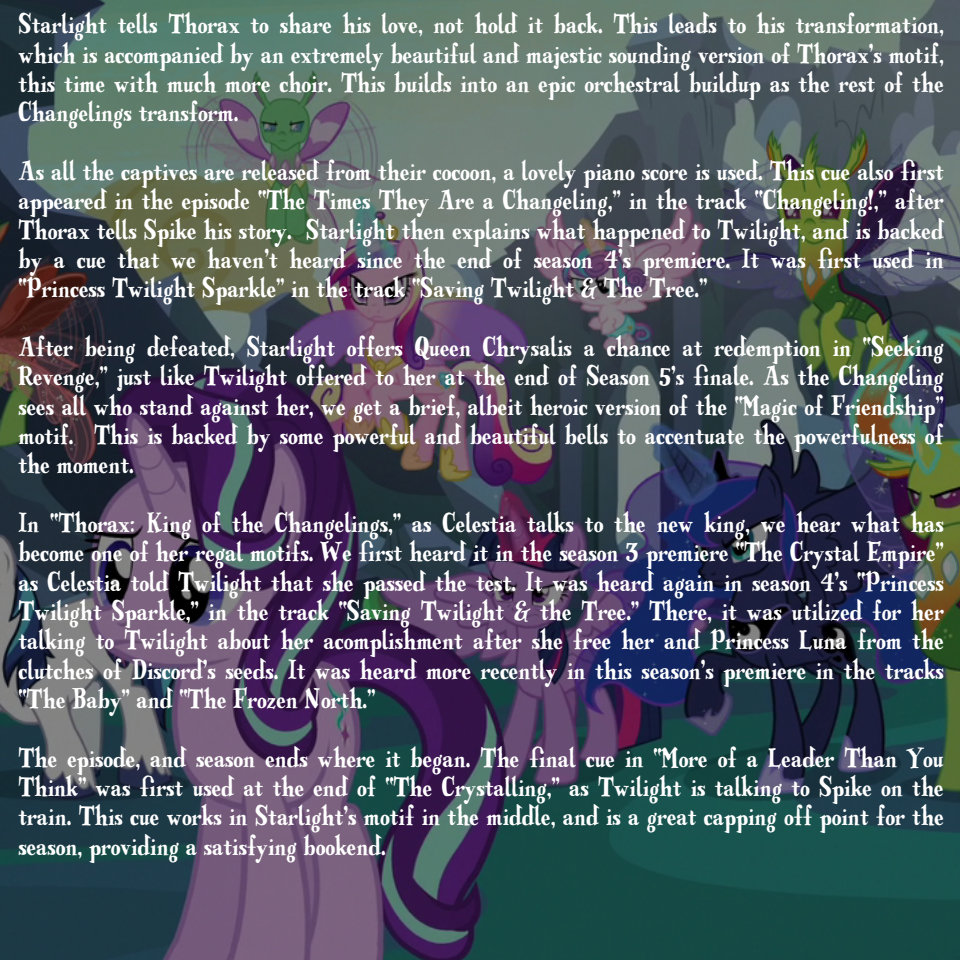
As Thorax tells Starlight what happened in the Crystal Empire, William Anderson used his motif from "The Times They Are a Changeling." It appeared in the track "Changeling!" from that episode, signifying it as Thorax's personal leitmotif now. Discord makes his appearance next, and brings with him his wacky score. He teleports the group to outside the Changeling castle, and as we see it, Chrysalis' evil motif is heard, leading to part 1's end.

As part 2 begins, the group of would-be heroes make their way into and through the Changeling castle, accompanied by some Changeling score. Discord's mischievous motif accompanies him bickering with Trixie, before he tries to make his heroic exit on a flying pig. A short alternate take of Starlight's reformed motif is heard as she talks next. The group then enters the Changeling castle, and is greeted with some very creepy score in the same style as the Changeling's other cues, which also mixes in some nice xylophone and choir.

Trixie receives some beautiful, inspirational score as she makes her final stand to let Starlight continue on their quest.

Queen Chrysalis returns in her title track, and brings her score as well. As she discovers Starlight's true plan, her motif appears. We've heard this cue before in her previous appearances in last season's finale ("The Cutie Re-Mark"), and her first appearance all the way back in season 2's "A Canterlot Wedding." When Starlight remembers Thorax's wings, the same score is used as when she noticed them in part 1.

In "Share the Love," Starlight makes her plea to the Changelings, telling them there is another way for them to feed. As she confronts Chrysalis and tells her she once was like her, Thorax's theme returns in a very triumphant orchestral way. There's a beautiful little flute part as



Starlight tells Thorax to share his love, not hold it back. This leads to his transformation, which is accompanied by an extremely beautiful and majestic sounding version of Thorax's motif, this time with much more choir. This builds into an epic orchestral buildup as the rest of the Changelings transform.

As all the captives are released from their cocoon, a lovely piano score is used. This cue also first appeared in the episode "The Times They Are a Changeling," in the track "Changeling!," after Thorax tells Spike his story. Starlight then explains what happened to Twilight, and is backed by a cue that we haven't heard since the end of season 4's premiere. It was first used in "Princess Twilight Sparkle" in the track "Saving Twilight & The Tree."

After being defeated, Starlight offers Queen Chrysalis a chance at redemption in "Seeking Revenge," just like Twilight offered to her at the end of Season 5's finale. As the Changeling sees all who stand against her, we get a brief, albeit heroic version of the "Magic of Friendship" motif. This is backed by some powerful and beautiful bells to accentuate the powerfulness of the moment.

In "Thorax: King of the Changelings," as Celestia talks to the new king, we hear what has become one of her regal motifs. We first heard it in the season 3 premiere "The Crystal Empire" as Celestia told Twilight that she passed the test. It was heard again in season 4's "Princess Twilight Sparkle," in the track "Saving Twilight & the Tree." There, it was utilized for her talking to Twilight about her accomplishment after she free her and Princess Luna from the clutches of Discord's seeds. It was heard more recently in this season's premiere in the tracks "The Baby" and "The Frozen North."

The episode, and season ends where it began. The final cue in "More of a Leader Than You Think" was first used at the end of "The Crystallizing," as Twilight is talking to Spike on the train. This cue works in Starlight's motif in the middle, and is a great capping off point for the season, providing a satisfying bookend.

SOUNDTRACK CREDITS



Music

Daniel Ingram

Score

William Anderson

Daniel Ingram

Orchestrations & Arrangements

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Kelly Davidson

Dave Corman

Trevor Hoffman

Lyrics

Daniel Ingram

Dave Polsky

Josh Haber

Michael Vogel

Dave Rapp

Ed Valentine

Kevin Burke & Chris "Doc" Wyatt

Ripped and Remastered by RainShadow

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